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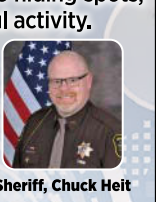

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Niles greenlights third annual Michiana PrideFest

FILE | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — A popular event will return to downtown Niles in June.

The Niles City Council moved 6-1 to approve a request for the third annual Michiana Pride Festival to be held at Riverfront Park on June 21.

Hosted by OutCenter Southwest Michigan in celebration of Pride Month, the event will take place from 4 to 8 p.m. June 21 and will feature music, live entertainment, food and booths from local businesses and artists. More than 1,000 people attended last year's Pride Fest.

"I've attended the event in the past two years and it is a wonderful event for the community," said Councilmember Jessica Nelson. "It's more attendance and more joy that I've seen in some other events that we have, which is really lovely to see and people from all walks of life. I think it's an important event to continue having in our community."

While the original motion called for Public Works and Utilities expenses and fees to be waived, the council amended the motion to waive the Public Works and Utilities expenses but require the OutCenter to pay the necessary vendor fees. Fourth Ward Councilmember Michael Thompson cast the lone dissenting vote because he does not believe the city should contribute funds toward events.

Niles to host Mainly Marathons event

In other business, council voted unanimously to approve Mainly Marathons' event taking place from 5 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, July 13 in Riverfront Park and to allow for the set up of travel trailers overnight Saturday, July 12 in the Riverfront Park south parking lot.

Mainly Marathons is a nationwide marathon group that chose the City of

See PRIDEFEST, Page A8

New Buchanan city manager hits ground running

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

BUCHANAN — The first day of Tony McGhee's tenure as the Buchanan City Manager went smoothly if Monday's Buchanan City Commission meeting was any indication. McGhee, a former Abonmarche executive, was chosen to be the new manager in late November after a month-long search.

McGhee reported that he "hit the ground running" Monday and looks forward to working with the City Commission. "Day one is in the books, it's been a great first day, I hit the ground running," he said.

"Welcome to the jungle," Commissioner Dan Vigansky said. "It went pretty smooth tonight." Other commissioners agreed and gave their welcome. Mayor Mark Weedon also took time to thank outgoing city manager Tim Lynch for his efforts.

"First and foremost, welcome," Weedon said. "Tony, we're super excited that on day one you have already proven your worth and we've only just begun. It's good to have someone capable and who understands what's coming up."

"We were also very fortunate we had Tim to get us on the straight and narrow," he added. "He proved that the city was not in financial straights we had all believed it was."

McGhee was able to give his expertise on several of the items on Monday's agenda. One included the city's acceptance of a state grant for $120,000 to pay for public safety and public works improvements. The grant is from the Financially Distressed Cities, Villages and Townships Grant program.

He also weighed in on the amendment to the city's contract with the Prein & Newhof engineering firm. That amendment set the 2025 hourly rates for engineering work. He told commissioners that while the new rates are in line with industry standards, he will look at changing the contract so the hourly rates won't change every year.

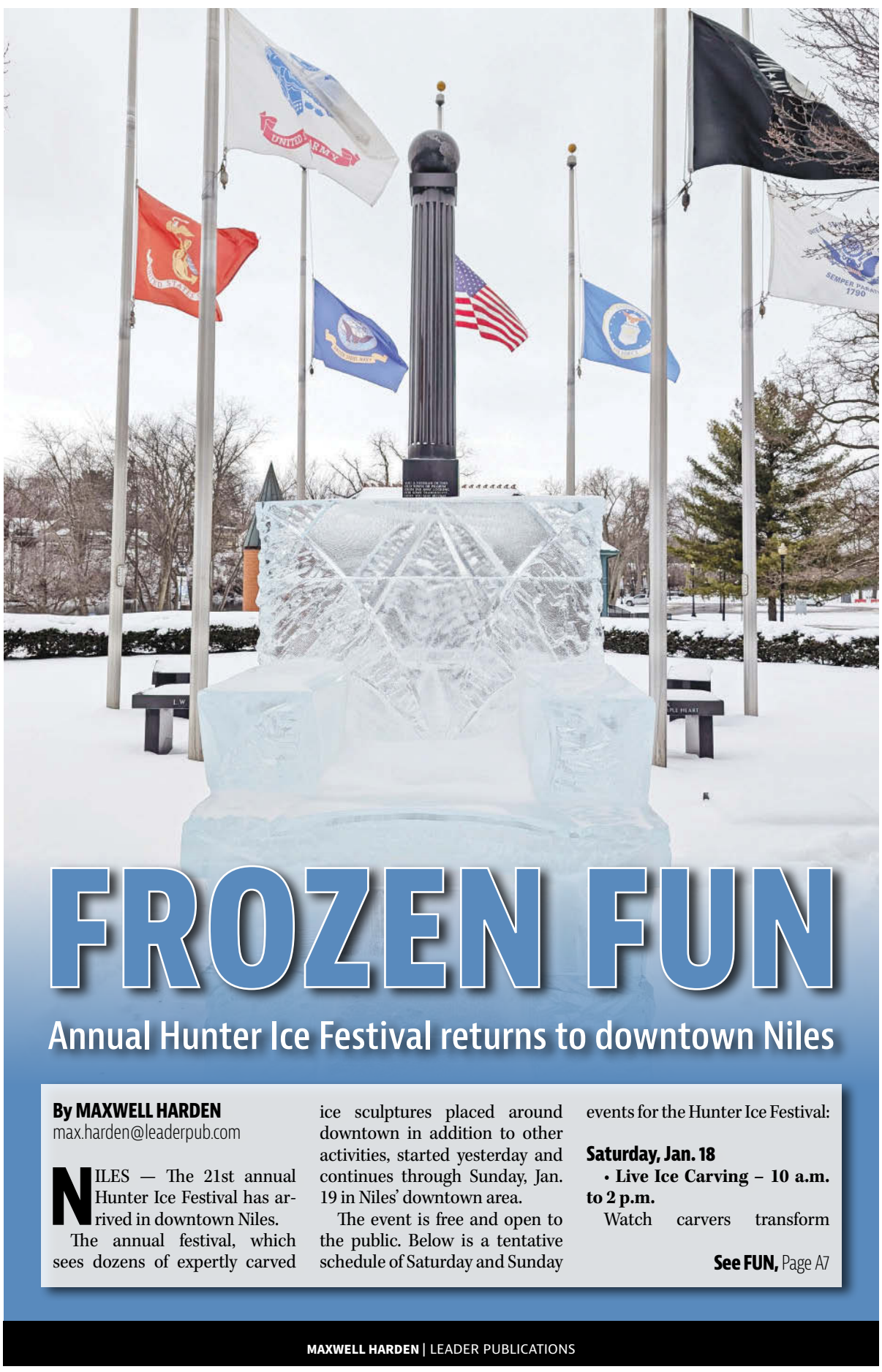
City Commissioners acted on two trail related items. Work will also be moving forward on the extension of the McCoy Creek Trail Extension Project after commission action. Commissioners approved the contract with the Michigan Department of Transportation for the completion of the project.

The project extends the existing trail a half mile along Schirmer Parkway to River Street and then across the River Street Bridge into Buchanan Township and out to the River St. Joe brewery and restaurant on Walton Road.

Funding for the $1.57 million project is coming from a variety of sources including federal and state grants and local private donations. Suzannah Deneau of Wightman and Associates said the project had to be rebid after initial bids came in too high.

She said that funding for the project includes $900,000 from two state MDOT grant

See MANAGER, Page A8



FROZEN FUN

Annual Hunter Ice Festival returns to downtown Niles

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — The 21st annual Hunter Ice Festival has arrived in downtown Niles.

The annual festival, which sees dozens of expertly carved ice sculptures placed around downtown in addition to other activities, started yesterday and continues through Sunday, Jan. 19 in Niles' downtown area.

The event is free and open to the public. Below is a tentative schedule of Saturday and Sunday events for the Hunter Ice Festival:

Saturday, Jan. 18

• Live Ice Carving – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Watch carvers transform

See FUN, Page A7

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Niles woman gets prison time on multiple charges

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

NILES — A Niles woman is headed to prison after being sentenced Monday in Berrien County Trial Court for several crimes occurring in the summer and fall of 2024.

Angela Jeanine Johnson, of Niles, pleaded guilty to receiving, concealing or possession of stolen property $1,000 to $20,000 and was sentenced to 29 months to five years in prison with credit for 95 days served. She must pay $198 in fines and costs with restitution to be determined.

Johnson

She also pled guilty to larceny in a building, attempted breaking and entering a building with intent to commit larceny and two counts of resisting and obstructing police and was sentenced to concurrent prison terms. She was given credit for time served and $125 in fines and costs for a misdemeanor charge of retail fraud.

She was sentenced to 14 months to four years for larceny in a building, 16 months to five years for attempted breaking and entering and two terms of 14 months to two years for the two resisting police counts. She must pay a total of $4,042 in fines, costs and restitution on those counts.

The incidents occurred between August and October in Niles.

Defense attorney Daniel French said Johnson was eligible for drug court and that her primary problem is her drug addiction. "She's struggled with it since she was a teen and it's only gotten worse," he said. "She's tired of that lifestyle, she knows she's made bad life choices and has lied to herself and others."

"She's scared, she's never taken the opportunities for services she's been given," he added. "This

See PRISON, Page A8

OBITUARIES

Shirley Grooms
Barbara Kubisiak
Pauline Kennedy
James Jesse
June Stanton
Guadalupe A. Castaneda, Sr.
John Yelape
Lawanda May
Richard R Hebron
Jack Amundsen

A6

FRANKLY
TIPS, QUIPS, AND BLIPS

"Go ND! Make us area folks proud." A2

Edwardsburg, Niles hoops battle in Little Warrior Big Heart contests B1

FRANKLY

TIPS, QUIPS, AND BLIPS

What is Frankly? It is where readers sound off on issues of the day. Have a tip, quip or blip? Call Frankly at (269) 687-7702 or email rich.cains@leaderpub.com

Thank you to the people who plow the snow during this bad weather. It's a dangerous job. Be safe.

Do not pour hot water on a cold windshield. That is a bad idea folks.

The housing market is really out of whack. I can't believe what people are paying in the area for housing. Some of these rental properties should be condemned and not fit for human habitation.

I hope the upcoming inauguration speech is graceful and full of hope and not threats against fellow Americans and other countries. It's time for peace and moving forward out of the mud.

The fires out west cannot be controlled. You cannot simply rake California. The rains cause shrubs and flowers to grow. Then they dry up and become kindling for lightning. People don't realize how big that state is and the impossible amount of resources needed to adequately control forest fires. Blaming the governor is wrong, even climate change is a questionable argument.

Please don't send your kids off to school without a hat, gloves and thick coat. It only takes seconds to have permanent damage to your skin, eyes, fingers and toes. The thin ears on a child can turn black quickly.

Go ND! Make us area folks proud.

The Detroit Lions have a clear path to the biggest game in their history and I hope they win in style.

WEATHER

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
40% Chance of Snow	50% Chance of Snow	50% Chance of Snow	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	30% Chance of Snow
27° 13°	13° 0°	4° -3°	7° 4°	18° 18°	27° 18°

SMC GRAD REFLECTS ON TIME ON CAMPUS

COMMUNITY REPORT

DOWAGIAC — When Katelynn Flowers left Sturgis, she didn't consider any other destination than Southwestern Michigan College.

Flowers, who attended SMC from 2014-16 and served as a Keith H. McKenzie Hall resident assistant her second year, selected the college "not only because of the beautiful campus, but because of the housing opportunities SMC provided."

"I felt SMC was a great start to my college career and would assist in acclimating me to life away from home while also providing a close-knit education experience. Turns out, I was right!"

"In all honesty," she added, "I didn't consider anywhere else! SMC was my first choice in starting my college career. I knew transferring was an option, so I hit the ground running in a place that made me feel comfortable, confident and cared for!"

Flowers majored in communications and continued that path at Western Michigan University when she transferred, earning a bachelor's degree in communications with an event management minor.

When she became an RA on McKenzie's second floor in 2015, she gave it a nautical theme, sharing that lasagna was her favorite food, purple her favorite color.

'RA was one of the best decisions I ever made'

"Becoming an RA was one of the best decisions I ever made," Flowers said. "It was an amazing way to connect more with the college and so many new students. This opportunity gave me a sense of responsibility that I had not experienced prior. In many ways, SMC shaped me and my work ethic."

Early on, Flowers "must have had a premonition of the future because my goal was to acquire a degree in either communications or marketing and use it at a local organization or company in some sort of marketing-focused role.

"Today, I live to tell the tale! I am working at a local credit union that works hard to serve its members and community members while providing excellent growth opportunities for employees."

Flowers utilized her degree in internships, side jobs and now her role at Arbor Financial Credit Union, where she was community and social media specialist.

She was responsible for hosting community events, credit union events, overseeing sponsorships and managing social media for the organization.

More digital responsibilities

Recently, she transitioned to a new specialist position as the digital marketing and content specialist.

"In this role I am responsible for more digital aspects," Flowers said. "I work closely with our digital marketing

See GRAD, Page A8

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Katelynn Flowers kisses Roadie the Roadrunner.

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Dowagiac man gets probation for drunk driving

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

CASSOPOLIS — Two area residents were sentenced Friday to probation in the Cass County Mental Health Court program.

A Dowagiac man was sentenced to probation for his third drunk driving conviction.

Elvis Charles Irving, Jr., 44, of First Street in Dowagiac, pleaded guilty to third offense operating while intoxicated/impaired and was sentenced to two years probation in the mental health court program, credit for six days served and $2,208 in fines, costs and restitution.

Irving

The incident occurred July 12, 2024 in Dowagiac. Police found Irving slumped over the steering wheel of his car outside the Dollar General store in the city. His speech was slurred and police could detect the odor of alcohol. He failed a sobriety test and his blood alcohol level was found to be .188, more than twice the legal limit.

Defense attorney Greg Feldman called alcohol a "horrible demon" which Irving can't consume again. "Some can drink a few beers and others can't or they will put themselves in a hole," he said. "He falls into the latter category of those who can't drink at all."

"I was pretty embarrassed by what I saw on the police video," Irving said. "I don't know that guy but that guy's me. I just want to be there for my kids ... I was a functioning alcoholic."

"People come into court and say they want to be there for their kids," Cass County Circuit Court Judge Mark Herman said. "You have two choices, your kids or alcohol. You can't have both, you can't have a drink if you want to be there for your kids."

"Mental health court is going to be real intensive," the judge added. "You have to check in every day and you will see me every two weeks. People are going to monitor you, look at your budget, where you are going and the things you can or can't do."

"If you violate treatment court, especially with drugs or alcohol, the reality is you will get a longer sentence than what you would get today," he said. "We're asking you to live a normal life, we're trying to get you to think differently and realize you don't need alcohol in your life."

An Elkhart woman who broke into an unoccupied home in Edwardsburg last year was given the chance to stay out of prison.

Amy Grace Evans, 38, of Elkhart, pleaded guilty to second-degree home invasion and was sentenced to three years probation in the mental health court, credit for 217 days served and $2,628 in fines and costs. Restitution could be ordered in the future.

The incident occurred June 1, 2024 in Edwardsburg. Evans and another woman broke into a home and stole some items before stealing a vehicle. They were caught on video and arrested a day later with the vehicle and items taken from the home.

Evans

Defense attorney Nicholas Hogue said that Evans was stealing items to support her drug habit. He said she spent her time in jail working to get a handle on her drug addiction. "She wasn't sitting there learning how to be a better criminal, but making her recovery a priority," he said.

"When you get an opportunity like this, if you don't take it seriously, you know the prosecutor will be asking for prison and the court will more likely to go to the higher end of the guidelines," Judge Herman said. "At this point, you may end up looking at three years in prison if you violate your probation."

"You are working on your high school diploma and you said you want to go to college, take care of your family and go to church," he added. "None of those things are going to happen if you continue to use drugs. You can't have drugs and kids, they're mutually exclusive. If you want to be there for your children, drugs can't be part of your life."

Niles council approves agreement with Wightman for Broadway Bridge project

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — The Broadway Bridge will soon receive needed improvements.

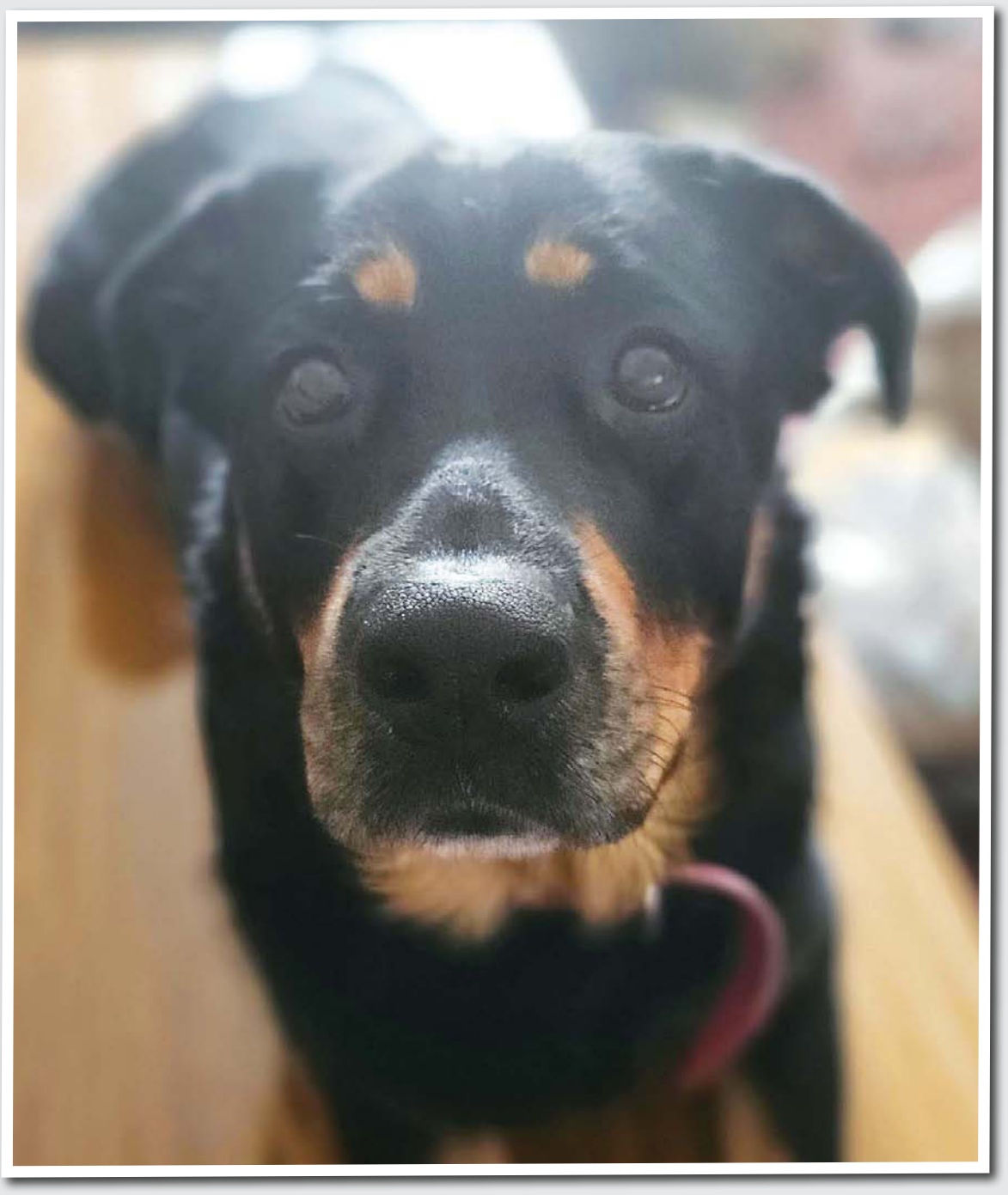
The Niles City Council voted unanimously to approve a Professional Services Agreement with Wightman for the city's Broadway Bridge project, which aims to restore the bridge to maintain reliable operation of the structure and preserve safe passage.

The Department of Public Works applied for Michigan Department of Transportation Local Bridge Funding in early 2024 and was successful securing $4,200,000 for construction in 2027 for the Broadway Bridge. The funding will be available and the projects can be let and awarded as early as November 2026.

MDOT will pay 95 percent of the cost of the project and the local share would be 5 percent of the total construction. The majority of the rehabilitation project includes a deck replacement, substructure repairs and coatings, bridge approach replacement and maintenance of traffic. Esthetics and enhancements are not considered in this type of project,

Request for Proposals were announced and two proposals – from Wightman and Fishbeck – were received. The selection process included cost, experience and capable staff. Both firms were confident that they would be in 5 to 10 percent of their proposed amount. Fishbeck proposed a cost of $589,400 while Wightman proposed $402,000.

PET OF THE WEEK



Bella is described by volunteers as an awesome dog with enchanting eyes and a beautiful face. A two year-old Rottweiler mix, Bella is described as being great with kids and would do well in a busy household with teens to play with. She loves to romp in the yard and cuddle while watching TV. Bella is good with other dogs, spayed, current on shots, housetrained. Contact Animal Aid at (269) 934-SPAY.

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Bible Truths: Reserve a spot today by emailing Carlson7071@att.net Study starts on Feb 3, 2025 at the Niles Senior Center at 1109 Bell Rd Niles, Michigan

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SMC students named to Honor Rolls

COMMUNITY REPORT

DOWAGIAC — Southwestern Michigan College named 48 students to the President's List for the Fall 2024 semester.

Students on the President's List must earn a perfect 4.0 grade-point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale while carrying a full study load of at least 12 credits.

The 190 students making the Dean's List achieved at least a 3.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale while carrying a full study load.

Area students include:

PRESIDENT'S LIST

South Bend
Tristen Peugh

Berrien Center
Kayleigh Staniszewski

Buchanan
Taylor McWilliams

Cassopolis
Kaylee Brooks, Matheson Imperio, Kamryn Smith

Dowagiac
Noe Beltran, Olivia Blackmond, Dayne Burnett, Diamond Collett, Tyger Crump, Connie Grabemeyer, Timothy McLaughlin, Kayla Patzer

Edwardsburg
Tyler Craig, Bria Floyd

Galien
Silas Dobson

Hartford
Kaylee Bradshaw, Mitzy Grana Diaz, Ivan Lopez

Niles
Samantha Curry, Travis Danelski, Grace Layman, Stella McDaniel, Devin Pethick, Shilah Semple, Caydance Sluder, Graciana Smith

Vandalia
Krista Schrader

DEAN'S LIST

Elkhart
Connor McPhee, Isaiah Morris, Keegan Parsons

Granger
Rodell Davis, Juliana Dunkelberger, Clayton Johanson

Berrien Center
Zachary Bennett

Berrien Springs
Kelsey Brown, Rebekah Griffiths, Nathan Hetler, Mirabelle Lei-Sam, Elizabeth Michelakis, Presley Prabhu

Buchanan
Abigail Carpenter, Collin Cozadd, Nathaniel Lakin, Payton Payne, Isabella Scheer, Luke Sherwood, Samuel Stellmach, Siara Stoddard, Hailey Warren, Eleanor Young, Katie Zebell

Cassopolis
Nathan Andrina, Aubrey Curtis, Ryaira Hester, Jamie Howard, Brooke Pettit

Decatur
Madelyn Bush, Hayley Jones, Sophia Lutz, Gavin Pattison, Tyler Shindeldecker

Dowagiac
Zane Ball, Michael Burks, Steven Bury, Koya Cross, Austin Evans, Landon Fisher, Ivan Gonzalez-Mandujano, Faith Huling, Angelica Jimenez, Sammy Linn, Elaine McCormick, Victor Newsome, Ariel Peters, Travis Rehborg, Carmen Wake, Stephanie Watford, Maggie Weller, Zachary Weller, Alexa Wilson, Bryce Zimmerman

Eau Claire
Neyda Antonio-Bernache, Marta DeLos Santos-Neponuceno, Arly Fitzgerald, Ayshia Smith

Edwardsburg
Kaiden Black, Mackenzie Brown, Larson Fessenden, Ashley Gonzalez, Elizabeth Hurst, Anika Kron, John Luebcke, Nicholas Moran, Killian Stankiewicz, Maxwell Weaver

Hartford
Riley Coulston, Bailey Daigle, Aurelio Delgado, Ruby Lopez-Vega, Jorge Meza, Lizaldy Valera

Niles
Tiffany Alliy, Kadence Bixby, Brian Bookout, Brittney Catanzarite, Brock Clendenin, Katarina Corley, Tia Cornelius, Samarah Custard, Jennifer Edmonds, Hudson Fields, Corbin Haines, Lauren Hart, Sophia Hojara, Xavier Hoadley, Nick Hoadley, Alexander Horvath, Makayla Jackmovich, Anna Johnson, Karli Kovalak, Holly Lawson, Casey Marlin, Kaleb McCombs, Mary Mcelvene, Isabella Moore, Aarika Morse, Kaylyn Moore, Katelyn Mowinski, Thorin Palmer, Madisen Payne, Serenity Pellow, Aiyana Rainwater, Nozhowen Rader, Dominick Sandoval, Emma Scott, Grace Scott, Jaxon Seddon, Nolan Taylor, Liz Van De Putte, Nylea Vanhphoumy

Vandalia
Miranda Cropsey, Atyanna Alford

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

The Cass County Board of Commissioners has selected Jeremiah Jones, left, as Chair of the Board, and James Lawrence as Vice Chair. The two will hold their positions for the 2025 calendar year.

Cass County Board of Commissioners appoints Chair, Vice Chair

COMMUNITY REPORT

CASS COUNTY — A familiar face will be holding the gavel at Board of Commissioner meetings this year, as District 4 Commissioner Jeremiah Jones was selected by his peers to serve as Board Chair for the third consecutive year.

At the board's Organizational Meeting Jan. 9, the board voted on multiple nominations, and ultimately selected Jones to again serve as chair. District 2 Commissioner James Lawrence was selected to serve as Vice Chair.

Jones, who represents most of Howard Township and the southern half of Pokagon Township, was first elected to the Board of Commissioners in 2020. He served as Chair of the Board in 2023 and 2024.

"I look forward to the days ahead and am confident in the team we have," Jones said.

Lawrence was first elected to the board in 2022. He represents the City of Dowagiac and southern Wayne Township.

"I am honored to continue serving Cass County as commissioner and now as Vice Chair," he said. "I am truly overwhelmed by the support I have received and remain committed to serving with the same dedication as I did my first term."

The Chair of the Board of Commissioners finalizes agendas and presides over meetings, assigns board member appointments to committees, signs official documents, serves as an ex officio member of all committees of the board, and makes decisions in major events such as weather closures and emergencies. The Vice Chair takes on the duties of the Chair in his absence and leads the board's Committee of the Whole meetings.

"My immediate priorities will be hiring an administrator, appointments and committees and moving the county forward in a positive direction for all," Jones said.

Cass County Finance Director Jennifer Rentfrow was appointed to serve as Interim County Administrator after Matthew Newton resigned his position as Administrator in December.

"My priorities reflect the foundational purpose of government: ensuring the safety and well-being of our citizens," Lawrence said. He cited key areas of focus being enhancing staffing levels for the Sheriff's Office, holding individuals accountable in the Courts, and providing critical assistance in times of emergency.

As part of the Organizational Meeting, the Board also approved the 2025 meeting schedule. Regular meetings will begin at 5 p.m. in Commissioners Chambers on the third floor of the Cass County Building, 120 N. Broadway, Cassopolis, on the following dates:

- January 9
- February 6
- March 6
- April 10
- May 1
- June 5
- July 10
- August 14
- September 4
- October 2
- November 6
- December 4

Committee of the Whole meetings will be held on the following dates:

- February 20

vMarch 20

- April 17
- May 15
- June 19
- July 17
- August 14
- September 18
- October 16
- November 20
- December 18

All meetings will begin at 5 p.m. in Commissioners Chambers, with the exception of the August 14 meeting. In order to allow the community and commissioners to focus on the Cass County Fair, both the Committee of the Whole and the Regular Meeting will be held on August 14.

Any changes to the meeting schedule will be posted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

Jo Dee Messina to perform in New Buffalo

COMMUNITY REPORT

NEW BUFFALO – The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians' Four Winds Casinos have announced that Jo Dee Messina will perform at Four Winds New Buffalo's Silver Creek Event Center on Saturday, June 28 at 9 p.m. Eastern.

Presale tickets are available now through Ticketmaster until Thursday, January 16 at 10 p.m. Eastern. Tickets for the general public go on sale on Friday, January 17 at 10 a.m. Eastern. Ticket prices for the show start at $49, plus applicable fees. Hotel rooms are available on the night of the concert and can be purchased with event tickets.

Jo Dee Messina, chart-topping country music artist, is known for her powerful vocals and extensive catalog of hits. Jo Dee has achieved nine No. 1 and sixteen Top 40 songs, and has been honored by the ACM, CMA, AMA, Billboard, and GRAMMY Awards. Jo Dee's successes also made her the first female in country music history to celebrate three consecutive multi-week, chart-topping songs.

Leader of the charge in country music's "90s resurgence," Jo Dee's digital streams and YouTube views are beyond the billions barrier and consistently climbing. Additionally, her social media accounts, which include numerous viral posts, are collectively followed by millions of fans.

In addition to her studio accomplishments, Jo Dee's performances have captivated audiences with every tour stop.

More information on Jo Dee Messina can be found at jodeemessina.com.

Niles Daily Star

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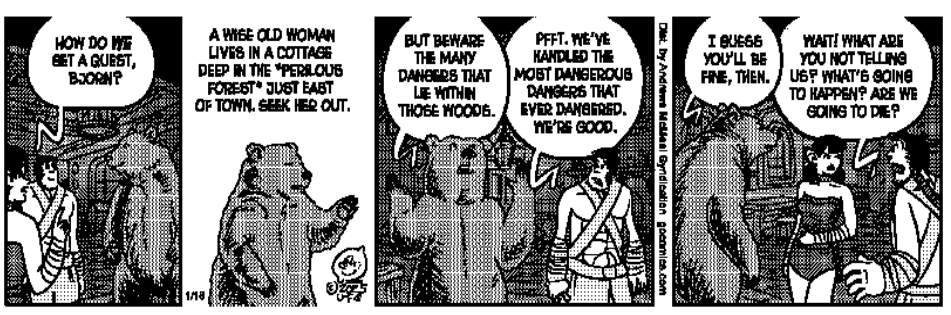
COMICS & PUZZLES

ADAM

DID YOU ENJOY SNOW TIME?
NO.
PLEASE DON'T BUNDLE ME UP AND MAKE ME DO THAT EVER AGAI---
AND MOM MADE WARM COOKIES. A POST-SNOW-TIME TRADITION.
SNOW TIME AIN'T SO BAD.

ALLEY OOP


HOW DO WE GET A GUEST, BJORN?
A WISE OLD WOMAN LIVES IN A COTTAGE DEEP IN THE "PERILOUS FOREST" JUST EAST OF TOWN. SEEK HER OUT.
BUT BEWARE THE MANY DANGERS THAT LIE WITHIN THOSE WOODS.
PFFT. WE'VE HANDLED THE MOST DANGEROUS DANGERS THAT EVER DANGERED. WE'RE GOOD.
I GUESS YOU'LL BE FINE, THEN.
WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU NOT TELLING US? WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN? ARE WE GOING TO DIE?

ARLO & JANIS

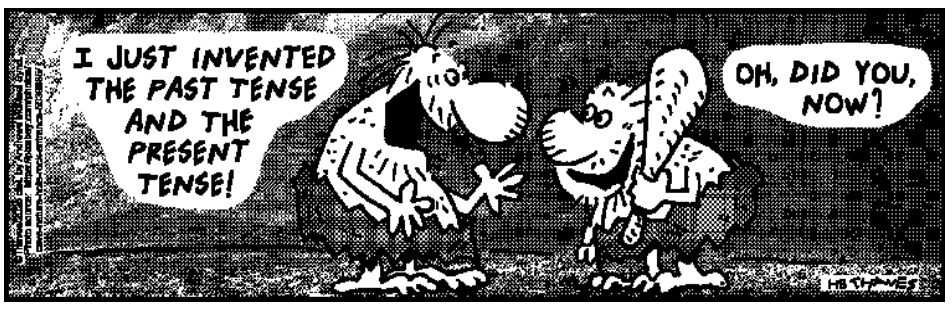
I HOPE THIS ISN'T AS BAD AS THE HAIL STORM TWO YEARS AGO!
IT WON'T BE.
CRRACK!
whoomp!
NOW, WHY ARE WE STALLING ABOUT MOVING TO THE COAST?
SOMETHING ABOUT THE WEATHER THERE

BIG NATE

THANKS FOR SHOVELING, HONEY! HAVE SOME BROWNIES!
ER... I SHOVELED TOO, MOTHER!
MIGHT I ALSO PARTAKE?
AW, SORRY, TED. YOU CALLED MY BROWNIES "DISTRESSINGLY CHEWY." SO NO, YOU MAY NOT.
BUT TELL YOU WHAT I'LL DO: I'LL CONTINUE TO ALLOW YOU TO LIVE HERE WITHOUT CHARGING YOU FOR ROOM, BOARD, AND LAUNDRY SERVICE.
DOES THE WOMAN'S CRUELTY HAVE NO LIMITS?
HOPE NOT.

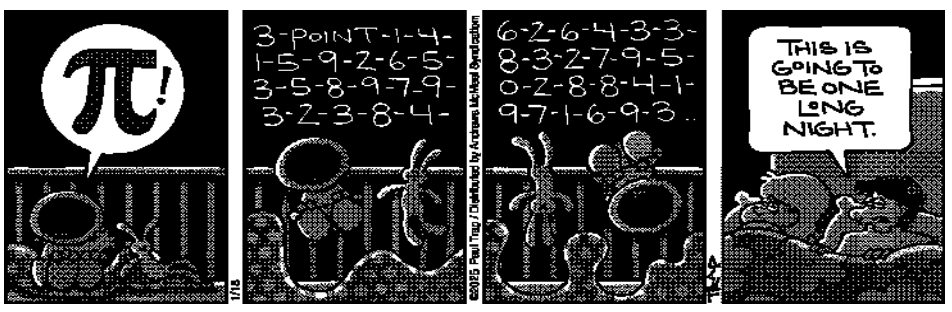
BORN LOSER

FRANK & ERNEST



GRIZZWELLS

THATABABY



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SODOKU PUZZLE

HOW TO PLAY: Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

DIFFICULTY RATING: 5/5

ANSWER ON PAGE 6

		3			8			6
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		9				7		
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		5		3			4	
				4	6		9	
4			1			5		

MODERATELY CONFUSED

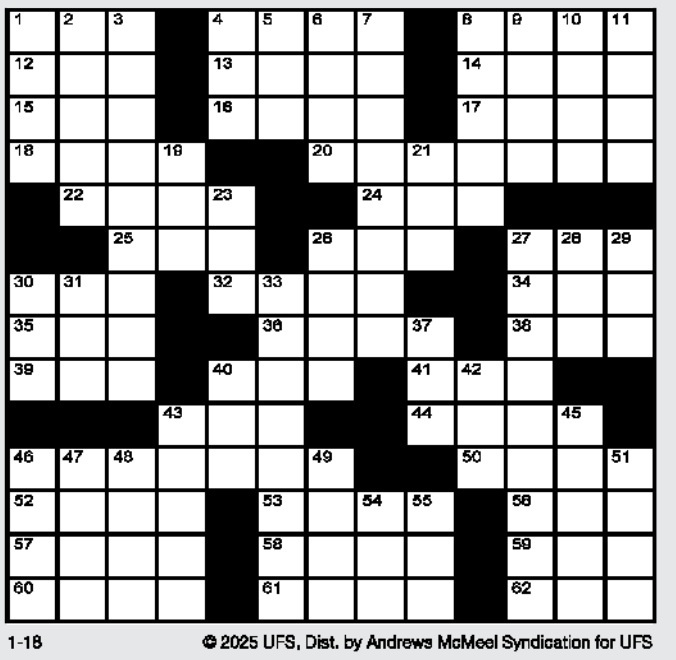
REALITY CHECK

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS
1 Barfly's bill
4 Highlander
8 "That's hilarious!"
12 "— Town"
13 Unadulterated
14 Molecule part
15 Savings vehicle
16 Summit
17 Man from Warsaw
18 Be idle
20 Cork
22 Lo-cal
24 Howl
25 Statute
26 Stir-fry pan
27 Provide guns
30 — pollol
32 Reverberate
34 Payable
35 Macaw genus
36 Walk through nature
38 Annoy
39 Sunbather's goal
40 Tote
41 Move to and —
43 Dry, said of wine
44 Bulletin board fastener
46 Flapjack
50 Horse's hair
52 Woodwind instrument
53 Stew pot
56 Levy
57 Black
58 Rideshare company
59 Holiday time
60 Grab
61 Chore
62 — Moines, Iowa

DOWN
1 Work hard
2 Hearing-related
3 Native of Sao Paulo
4 Health club
5 Mug
6 Minerals
7 Student's tome
8 Joyous
9 Perched on
10 Perforation
11 Part of USA
19 Zeta follower
21 Hard wood
23 Female sheep
26 Tory's opponent
27 Was in favor of
28 — anemone
29 Tex- — fare
30 Bowler
31 "... man — — mouse?"
33 Discard (2 wds.)
37 Newt
40 Green expanse
42 Male sheep
43 Mise-en- —
45 Scoundrel
46 Versifier
47 Swedish pop group
48 Recess
49 Place of Napoleon's exile
51 Old flames
54 "— Miserables"
55 Noah's boat

ANSWER ON PAGE 6



1-18

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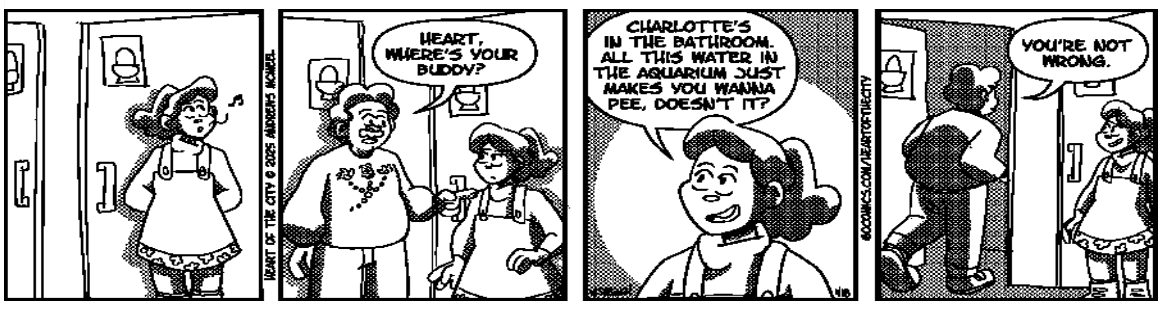
BREVITY

HEART OF THE CITY


HEART, WHERE'S YOUR BUDDY?
CHARLOTTE'S IN THE BATHROOM. ALL THIS WATER IN THE AQUARIUM JUST MAKES YOU WANNA PEE, DOESN'T IT?
YOU'RE NOT WRONG.

DEATH NOTICES

Damon Christopher, 53, of Dowagiac passed away on Friday,-January 10, 2025. Arrangements are pending and have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Niles. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com.

Marvin Robinson, 75, Niles, passed Friday, January 10, 2025. Funeral services were 10am January 17, 2025 at Buchanan Christian Church. Brown Funeral Home in Niles was entrusted with arrangements. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com.

Ramona Greenhaw, 86, of Berrien Center, Michigan, passed away Sunday, January 12, 2025. Arrangements have been entrusted to Bowerman Funeral Home in Eau Claire, Michigan. www.BowermanFuneral.com

Debra Cook, of Niles, Michigan, passed away January 11, 2025. A visitation for Debra will be held at Brown Funeral Home on February 7, 2025, from 4:00PM to 7:00PM. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com

Theron Kurbis, 63, of Niles, passed January 3, 2025. Graveside service will be January 21, 2025 at 10am at Dailey Cemetery. Arrangements entrusted to Brown Funeral Home, Niles. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com

Robert E. Cook, Sr., 88, of Dowagiac, died Wednesday, January 15, 2025. Arrangements are pending at Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis.

OBITUARIES

Marcy Burdue

June 20, 1964 -
January 5, 2025

Marcy Burdue was born on June 20, 1964, to Jerald and Mary Ann Burdue. Her kindness radiated freely to everyone she encountered.

Marcy was an avid reader, having read all the books by Stephen King (including those written under his pen names), a frequent concert-goer (Ozzy was her all-time favorite), and a halfway-decent bowler. She enjoyed fishing and found great joy and peace in the Great Lakes. Most of all, she was a fantastic mother to Jerrid and an adopted grandmother to Blane, Londyn, and Lincoln. She and Jerrid would often play "lost" when he was young, driving without a destination in mind to various restaurants and providing unofficial reviews. She encouraged her son to be his true self and allowed him to try anything—after all, if it was an experiment, it was okay. From taking up the carpet and working on the hardwood floors when he was in high school to texting his wife to ask if she was also watching him on YouTube learning the sport of curling, Marcy was, without a doubt, the most supportive of mothers. She taught those close to her the true meaning of unconditional love.

She is survived by her son, Jerrid (Natalie) Burdue; her father, Jerald Burdue; and close friends who are considered family, including Lisa Chappell-Guyott, Nicole Osban-Peck, Blane Belakovich, Londyn Peck, and Lincoln Peck.

Preceding her in death were her mother, Mary Ann Burdue; her brother, Kerry Burdue; and her beloved dog, Nikki.

We encourage everyone to take a walk along a beach or visit a lighthouse (with a Diet Pepsi, of course) in lieu of flowers.

There will be no services at this time.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Shamra Zabonick

December 29, 1963 -
December 29, 2024

Shamra Dell Zabonick, 61, of Dowagiac, died Sunday, December 29, 2024.

Her life began December 29, 1963 in Granbury, Texas, the only child of Robert and Juanice Anderson.

Shamra enjoyed country music. She worked in various positions with different companies over the years, but most recently she was a Custodian with EVS. She was a kind and considerate person, but a person would not walk away from her without knowing what she truly thought. She loved helping others.

Shamra will be greatly missed by family and friends. She is survived by one daughter, Kalley (Jacob Strickland) Zabonick of Dowagiac; one son, Nathan (Lauren) Zabonick of Florida; two grandchildren, Azrael Wallace, Jonah Zabonick and a host of cousins.

She was preceded in death by her parents.

The family will observe a private remembrance.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

Helen Leich

October 20, 1929 -
January 9, 2025

Helen L. Leich, 95, of Dowagiac, passed away late Thursday evening, January 9, 2025, at Woodland Terrace of Paw Paw Lake, Coloma, Ml.

She was born on October 20, 1929, in Dowagiac, the daughter of the late Earl and Odessa Keyser. On May 15, 1948, Helen was united in marriage to Dean G. Leich. She was employed by the Dowagiac Schools in the administration office for 34 years until her retirement in 1985.

Surviving are two children - John Leich and Mary (Dale) First; two grandchildren - Chris (Jenny) Leich and Tim (Angie) First; and three great-grandchildren - Henry, Charlotte and Claire First.

Preceding her in death were her husband of 59 years, Dean Leich; and three sisters, Vesta Langley, Dorothy Mullen and Margie Enos.

A service to celebrate Helen's life will be held at 11:00 am on Tuesday, January 14, at Clark Chapel and Cremation Services - Starks Family Funeral Homes, 405 Center St, Dowagiac, where friends may visit with the family from 10:00 am until the time of service. Chaplain Ellen Laan will officiate. Donations may be made to the Dowagiac Public Library. Please visit Helen's personalized webpage to share a memory or leave condolences to her family at www.clarkch.com.

James Checkley

February 10, 1962 -
January 10, 2025

James Allen Checkley, 62, passed away on Friday, January 10, 2025 at Marion VA Medical Center, Marion, IN. He was born on February 10, 1962 in South Bend, IN to Robert William Checkley and Karole Checkley.

James was a proud Army Veteran and led a life marked by dedication, service, and a deep sense of community. After serving his country with honor, James transitioned to civilian life, bringing his meticulous attention to detail and problem-solving skills to his role as a repair technician at Cannon. His work was not just a job but a reflection of his commitment to excellence and his enjoyment of tackling complex challenges.

Beyond his professional endeavors, James was an active member of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Chapter 19 in Elkhart, Indiana. His involvement with the DAV was a testament to his unwavering support for fellow veterans and their families.

Per James request, there will be no services and cremation is planned.

Survivors include his son, James Checkley; brothers, Mike (Beth) Checkley, Stephen Checkley, Tim Gray and Brian Gray.

He was preceded in death by his father, Robert Checkley; mother, Karole Brown; brother, Brian Checkley, and sister, Debbie Engler.

Arrangements were entrusted to Jewell-Rittman Family Funeral Home, Columbus, IN.

Anne-Lore Sachtler

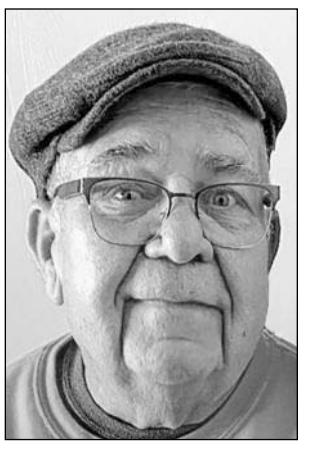
June 1, 1925 -
January 12, 2025

Anne-Lore Luise (Adrian) Sachtler, 99, passed away peacefully from our world on January 12, 2025, surrounded by her family.

She was born on June 1, 1925, in Neu-Ulm, Germany. Anne-Lore was a skillful teacher and was held in high regard by her pupils. She lived by example, was honest, inspirational, respectful, always positive, and encouraged harmony within the family. It was an honor to know her and she will be greatly missed by her family and friends.

Anne-Lore was the proud wife of her late husband Professor Wolfgang Sachtler; the beloved mother of Adriaan Sachtler and his wife Patricia, Heike (Sachtler) Zaman and her husband Niek, and Yvonne (Sachtler) Alton and her husband Craig; cherished grandmother of Karl Putz, Patrique Zaman, Matthew Sachtler, Paul-Josse Zaman, and Michelle Sachtler; and loving great-grandmother of Murphy Putz, Meadow Putz, Ignatius Hermes, Zenna Zaman, Basil Hermes, and Maya Zaman.

Honoring Anne-Lore's wishes, cremation has taken place and a private service to celebrate her life will be held at a later date. Arrangements were entrusted to Clark Chapel and Cremation Services - Starks Family Funeral Homes, Dowagiac. Please visit Anne-Lore's personalized webpage to share a memory or leave a condolence to her family at www.clarkch.com.



Thomas Lehrer

December 18, 1938 -
January 11, 2025

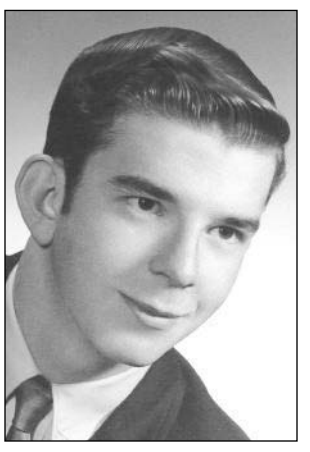
Thomas J. Lehrer, 86, of Niles, formerly of Dowagiac, passed away on Saturday afternoon, January 11, 2025, at Corewell Health Niles Hospital.

He was born on December 18, 1938, in Appleton, WI, the son of the late Moritz R. and Anna E. (O'Brien) Lehrer. On January 14, 1961, he was united in marriage to the former Bernice "Jane" Kusterer. Tom was employed by F.W. Woolworth Co. for 46 years until their closing in 1996, where he retired as Vice President.

Surviving are three children - Charles Lehrer of Texas; Joan (Jerry) Povalawski of Idaho and Patty (Brad) Hickerson of Niles; twelve grandchildren; Carolyn (Bob) Shay, Jessica (Matt) Powers, Megan (Michael) DeLaFuente, Kathy (Andy) Hornbacher, Kelly (Lucas) Borah, Mike (Sarah) Kretchman, Scott (Jennifer) Kretchman, Rachel Fulmer, Spencer Calley, Ashley (Matt Klein) Calley, Samantha (Tyler) Ford and Wyatt Hickerson; two sisters - Monica (Larry) Carlson and Loretta Zielinski; and many great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

Preceding him in death were his wife of 54 years - Jane Lehrer; brother - John Lehrer and sister - Anna Mae Lehrer.

Private family services were held in Sacred Heart Cemetery, Dowagiac. Arrangements were entrusted to Clark Chapel - Starks Family Funeral Homes, Dowagiac. Please visit Tom's personalized webpage to share a memory or leave condolences to his family at www.clarkch.com.



Jerry Lee Curtis

Jerry Lee Curtis, 73, of Dowagiac, passed away, early Tuesday morning, January 14, 2025, at Ascension Borgess Hospital in Kalamazoo, MI.

He was born on August 27, 1951, in Dowagiac. A graduate of Dowagiac High School, Jerry was a welder by trade and was employed by K&M Fabricating in Cassopolis for over 30 years. Jerry he owned and operated Curt Craft LLC in Dowagiac for several years, until his retirement. In his earlier years, Jerry was an avid drag car racer. He raced at US 131 Motorsports Park in Martin, MI and Osceola Dragway in Osceola, IN. After retirement, Jerry enjoyed breakfast at Mr. Wahoo's Eatery in Dowagiac.

Surviving are his wife of 42 years, Linda L. Curtis; daughter - Nancy; two grandchildren; three stepsons - Bryan (Robin) Sandberg, Ray (Della) Sandberg, and Dan (Kristen) Sandberg; twelve step-grandchildren; and six step-great-grandchildren.

Preceding him in death were his parents - Russell and Marion (Edgerton) Curtis; and brother - Roger Curtis.

Honoring Jerry's wishes, cremation has taken place and a service to celebrate his life will be announced at a later date. Arrangements were entrusted to Clark Chapel and Cremation Services - Starks Family Funeral Homes, Dowagiac. Please visit Jerry's personalized webpage to share a memory or leave a condolence to his family at www.clarkch.com.

Kevin G Richardson

June 15, 1959 -
January 14, 2025

Kevin Gregg Richardson, 65, of Cassopolis, transitioned peacefully from this life into the arms of his savior Jesus Christ, in the comfort of his family's presence, Tuesday January 14, 2025.

His life began June 15, 1959 in Niles, the younger of two children born to Albert and Patricia Richardson. He married Beverly Bonine in 1979 at the Cassopolis United Methodist Church. She survives.

Kevin was a Cassopolis Ranger, he played in the band, graduating in 1977. He was on the Cassopolis school board for three years while his daughters were in school. During that time, he had the honor to present them both with their diplomas. Kevin retired from Manufacturing Technology after working there for over thirty years. He had the opportunity to travel across the world for his work, going to France, Russia, and many times to China. In his younger years, you could often find Kevin playing tennis with his friend Scott Marshal. He was also an avid Notre Dame and Bears fan. Kevin played trumpet and guitar and loved to listen to and play all kinds of music. Kevin and Beverly would go out together with friends to listen to bands and dance. They also shared time together on their motorcycle riding with friends. Kevin was loyal to his family, friends, and his work. He spent many nights stargazing and watching for UFOs. He was a dreamer who liked to work to make his dreams come true. Kevin loved his family and was the best Papa ever.

Kevin will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by wife, Beverly Richardson of Cassopolis; two daughters, Erica (Matthew) Parmelee of Osceola, Indiana, Tara (Joseph) Powell of Wakarusa, Indiana; five grandchildren, Blake, Alexis, Bryce, Jackson and Raelyn; one great grandson, Dallas; one brother, Michael (Vickie) Richardson; and four nieces and one nephew. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Family is planning a Rock and Roll Memorial at their home in the spring of 2025.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Kevin be made to, Cass County Medical Care Facility, 23770 Hospital Street, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031 or Cass County Council on Aging, Post Office Box 5, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031

Arrangements have

See OBITUARIES, Page A6

CROSSWORD ANSWER
From Page 5

T	A	B		S	C	O	T		H	A	H	A		
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SUDOKU ANSWER
From Page 5

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9	6	5	7	3	2	1	4	8
7	8	1	5	4	6	3	9	2
4	3	2	1	8	9	5	6	7

MGCF Scholarship Application Opens

COMMUNITY REPORT

BUCHANAN — The Michigan Gateway Community Foundation has announced the launch of its annual scholarship application process. The application portal is now open for students interested in applying for a variety of scholarships for the 2025 academic year.

Students are encouraged to apply early, as the deadline for all applications is March 15th at 11:59 pm. The application can be accessed through the official MGCF website at www.mgcf.org/mgcf-scholarships.

MGCF offers a variety of scholarships for high school seniors, college students, and adult learners pursuing higher education opportunities. The scholarships aim to support students in achieving their academic goals and contribute to their success in both educational and career endeavors.

Early submissions are encouraged to ensure all materials are complete and to allow for any potential technical issues or questions that may arise.

For students who may need assistance or have questions about the application process, MGCF's staff is available to

help. Please don't hesitate to reach out for support or clarification. You can reach out to Nicole Mireles, Program Officer at nmireles@mgcf.org.

Niles Haunted House to give away scholarships to Niles area students

COMMUNITY REPORT

NILES — The Niles Haunted House Board of Directors has announced that it is awarding four $500 scholarships to three seniors at the Niles High School and one senior at the Brandywine High School. Also, several $500 scholarships will be awarded to several seniors at one or more of the following schools: Brandywine High School, Buchanan High School, Dowagiac High School, Edwardsburg High School, Lakeshore High School or Niles High School. One $500 scholarship will be awarded to one senior at Penn High School.

A scholarship of $500 will be awarded in memory of William F. Alford, Jr. to a qualifying senior at the Niles High School. Preference will be given to students pursuing education in the field of business. Other criteria include community service, economic need and academic merit.

Scholarships of $500 also will be awarded in memory of Lou Milley to a qualifying senior at Niles High School and in memory of John Carlson to a qualifying senior at Brandywine High School. As above, the scholarships are awarded based on community service, economic need and academic merit. The Lou Milley scholarship gives preferential treatment to those applicants who have a background in graphic arts or plan on majoring in this area.

Another scholarship is offered in memory of longtime volunteer Gottlieb "Chris" Christ. This scholarship also is for $500 and is open to seniors at the Niles High School. It will be awarded based on the criteria listed above.

The Shurte Family Memorial Scholarship is made possible by the Shurte family and friends. The scholarship is worth up to $500 and seniors from Niles, Brandywine, Lakeshore, Buchanan, Edwardsburg and Dowagiac High Schools are eligible to apply. Applicants must have completed at least 50 hours of volunteer work at the Niles Scream Park in the last two years, demonstrate academic success and be attending a secondary college, university or trade school in the next academic year.

The Patrick Glossenger Honorary Scholarship is made possible by Patrick Glossenger. One $500 scholarship will be awarded to a senior at Penn High School. The scholarship is awarded based on community service, economic need and academic merit.

In order to be considered for these scholarships, community service is required. For more information, contact appropriate school guidance counselors and ask for the applicable scholarship application.

Joseph and Rosemary Low Foundation donates $50,000 to United Way

COMMUNITY REPORT

ST. JOSEPH — The Joseph N. and Rosemary E. Low Foundation has announced a $50,000 donation to United Way of Southwest Michigan.

The annual gift, made in memory of Wilma V. Low, will directly benefit the organization's 2024 campaign, helping to drive meaningful impact across the region.

"The Joseph N. and Rosemary E. Low Foundation's continued support is a powerful testament to the difference we can make together," said Sharon Polfus, Director of Major Gifts at United Way of Southwest Michigan. "This returning annual gift not only honors the Low family's legacy but also strengthens our ability to respond to the evolving needs of our community. Their generosity fuels our efforts to create lasting change, ensuring every dollar counts toward improving lives in Southwest Michigan."

Polfus added, "With this contribution to our 2024 campaign, we're reminded of the vital role recurring gifts play in building a stable foundation for our work. This partnership enables us to plan for sustainable solutions, knowing we have champions like the Low Foundation by our side."

The donation was facilitated by Dr. John N. Low, son of Joseph and Wilma Low and stepson and nephew of Rosemary. Dr. Low, an Associate Professor in Comparative Studies at The Ohio State University, maintains close ties to southwest Michigan.

The gift was made in memory of Wilma V. Low, lifelong resident of Niles. According to Dr. Low, "the mission of the Foundation is to support individuals and organizations lifting up those in need in our community."

Dr. Low serves as the director of the Newark Earthworks Center at The Ohio State University. He holds a Ph.D. in American Culture, a Juris Doctorate, and a graduate certificate in Museum Studies from the University of Michigan, as well as degrees from Michigan State University, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Chicago.

For more information about Dr. John N. Low and the Low Foundation, visit johnnlow.com.

If your foundation or fund would like to discuss sustainable giving, or you'd like to consider United Way of Southwest Michigan in your estate planning, please contact Sharon Polfus at sharon.polfus@uwsm.org or call 269-932-3455.

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

FUN

Continued from page A1

blocks of ice into sculptures. The live carving event will be happening at the corner blocks all day Saturday.

• **Ice Fights at the Amphitheater – 4:30 p.m.**

Witness competitive action at Ice Fights, happening in the Amphitheater at 4:30 p.m., to see who will come out on top in a battle of ice and skill.

• **Hunter Ice Cream Booth**

Visit the Ice Cream Booth sponsored by Culver's of Niles, open from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday.

• **Interactive Games – Ongoing**

Enjoy the fun all day long with our interactive games in the ice! Get your Ping Pong, Golf, Plinko, and Ice Pickleball fix until the games melt away.

Sunday, Jan. 19

• **Hunter Ice Cream Booth**

Grab a scoop from Culver's of Niles as the booth remains open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. for your Sunday sweet tooth fix.

• **Interactive games.**

As long as the weather cooperates, the games will stay up including the Children's Center sledding hill.

OBITUARIES

Continued from page A6

been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

William "Jay" Elliott

March 4, 1947 - anuary 15, 2025

William "Jay" Elliott, 77, a lifelong resident of Dowagiac, passed away on Wednesday morning, January 15, 2025, at Rose Arbor Hospice in Kalamazoo, MI.

Jay was born on March 4, 1947, in Dowagiac, MI to the late William and Alice (King) Elliott.

Jay, as many knew him, was an honorary member of the Dowagiac Fire Dept for 55 years. He also helped with the gates at home football games. When not doing this, Jay could be seen walking through town visiting local businesses, or at home tending to his cat. He also enjoyed spending time with his best friends Bobby and Lupe Nelson who were always there to help him when he needed it.

Jay is survived by two sisters - Arlene D. Keys of Dowagiac, and Rita K Quijas of Niles; nieces and nephews - Sally and Daine Keys, Charles, Jake, Priscilla and April Hatfield, Bruce Stillwell and Leon Quijas.

Jay is preceded in death by his parents - three sisters - Sue Hatfield, Norma Elliott and Theresa Elliott; brothers-in-law - James A Keys Sr and nephew - James "Jimmy" Keys Jr.

A service to celebrate Jays' life will be held at a later date and will be announced by the family. Arrangements were entrusted to Clark Chapel and Cremation Services - Starks Family Funeral Homes, Dowagiac. Please visit Jay's personalized webpage to share a memory or leave a condolence to his family at www.clarkch.com.

PRIDEFEST

Continued from page A1

Niles as its destination in the Heartland Series of its tour. The group anticipates 140 runners from out of state on Sunday, July 13 from 5 a.m. to 4 p.m. with the Walking/Running event starting at 6 a.m. The staging area will be in the parking lot next to the boat landing and the course will remain on the Riverfront Trail using the same setup and course as previous years. Safety cones and safety signs will be placed on the course. The course would remain open to the public with no barricades used.

In further business, council:

• Approved the transfer of the airport ground lease from Dr. Harold Brown to James and Denise VanHulle with an expiration date of December 31, 2029.

• Approved an agreement authorizing Berrien County to conduct school elections for Niles Community Schools, Lake Michigan College, and RESA.

• Conducted the first reading of an Ordinance to amend Ordinance 492 to allow marihuana microbusinesses to transition to retail and grow licenses.

• Conducted the First reading of an Ordinance to amend Ordinance 491 to allow marihuana microbusinesses to transition to retail and grow licenses and change marihuana business retail hours to 7 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.

• Conducted the first reading of an Ordinance to amend Ordinance 488 to change marihuana business retail hours to 7 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.

FILE | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

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MANAGER

Continued from page A1

sources, a Michigan Department of Natural Resources grant for $300,000 and then private donations of over $200,000 from local sources. The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission and Be Healthy Berrien contributed another $100,000, she said.

Commissioners and residents also discussed future trail plans including connecting the McCoy Creek Trail with the Indiana-Michigan River Valley Trail as the latter trail is extended north from Niles.

Friends of McCoy Creek Trail Chairman Jerry Flenar presented a proposed letter of support his organization wanted the city to sign. Commissioners ended up voting to have Mayor Mark Weedon sign the letter to support for the project.

The letter presented by Flenar stated that the city of Buchanan supports the Niles-Buchanan Trail Connection Project that involves the construction of a 3.4 mile improved shared-use path along Walton Road including a trailhead at Walton and Winn Roads.

"This key project in Southwest Michigan will connect the cities of Niles and Buchanan in Berrien County by linking two regionally significant trails, the McCoy's Creek Trail and the Indiana-Michigan River Valley Trail," the letter stated. "The McCoy's Creek Trail is a six mile trail through Buchanan, while the Indiana-Michigan River Valley Trail is a 20 plus mile trail that routes from Niles to Mishawaka, Indiana."

The letter goes on to note that the project will have multiple benefits ranging from health and community building to economic and tourism development and improving the quality of life.

Work on the Front Street retaining wall can move forward with the commission accepting a bid of $303,130 from a local construction company. The project was rebid late last year and four bids were received with the new bidding.

Also Monday, commissioners approved the renewal of two adult use marijuana retailer permits for Zen Leaf and Cannavista as well one medical marijuana retailer permit for Zen Leaf. Community Development Director Richard Murphy noted that while the cannabis market is changing, it has served as a catalyst for other development in the downtown.

Commissioners approved the restaurant incentive grant for the newly opened Thistledown & Row restaurant. They approved draft school election agreements with Buchanan Community Schools, Lake Michigan College and Berrien RESA as well as the demolition of a structure at Victory and Richards Streets with funding from the Niles-based Hunter Foundation.

Commissioners also heard about a new restaurant opening in the former Redbud Insurance building on Main Street. Murphy introduced the investors who told commissioners a little about their plans.

PRISON

Continued from page A1

has been a wake up call, she's hit rock bottom. I ask that you consider drug court and probation, she knows this is her last chance."

Berrien County Trial Court Judge Gordon Hosbein noted that Johnson's past record includes 31 misdemeanors and seven felonies. He said he was sentencing her to prison for protection of the community and for her rehabilitation.

"I don't like sending people to prison," the judge said. "I hope you understand that this is not the lifestyle for you. It's time to maintain your sobriety. I wish you well."

Corie Cook, 45, pleaded guilty to possession of methamphetamine and was sentenced to a year in jail. She has credit for 125 days already served and must pay $198 in fines and costs.

Assistant Prosecutor Myrene Koch noted that Cook has been given multiple chances for probation and treatment. "Unfortunately she hasn't taken advantage of those services," she said. "She knows what she needs to do to break the cycle."

Defense attorney Shayne Williams said that she thought Cook would benefit from probation. For her part, Cook apologized for making poor decisions and said she had handled the deaths of a child and a friend poorly. "It's time to take my life back and make a better future for myself and my family," she said.

"You had opportunities in the past to get treatment," Judge Hosbein said. "You will have issues throughout your life. I wish you well, you have to try to do something different. You can't keep doing the same things if they're not working."

In other sentencings, a Buchanan man was sentenced to jail and probation after being found guilty of domestic violence by a jury last fall.

Terry Lynn Anderson, Jr., 35, of Buchanan, was found guilty of third offense domestic violence and was sentenced to 18 months probation, 150 days in jail with credit for two days served and $1,758 in fines and costs.

The incident occurred last April in Buchanan.

Koch noted that Anderson had been sentenced to probation before and shown minimal improvement. She said that Anderson continues to handle issues by becoming angry.

Anderson apologized for his actions. "I'm very sorry, I was wrong," he said. "I could have handled things differently. It was a very unfortunate situation."

Judge Hosbein reviewed Anderson's past record of 12 misdemeanors and one felony including domestic violence convictions in 2007, 2018 and 2022. "This cycle is perpetuating," he said. "You have not been rehabilitated even though you've been given services and tools. Nothing has worked."

"I'm more concerned about what this means for your children," he added. "They think this behavior is okay, that this is how men should behave. It's not what you tell your children but what you do. What do you do to change the cycle so they don't become abusers."

"You've done no time in jail in the past," he said. "Jail time doesn't necessarily solve the problem but if we keep doing the same thing, it's not doing you or the community any service."

Also Monday:

• Craig Allen Scott, of South Bend, pleaded guilty to uttering and publishing and was sentenced to two years probation, credit for 44 days served and $2,133.10 in fines, costs and restitution.. The incident occurred in 2014.

• Nicholas Ross Surowiecki, Jr., of Niles, pleaded guilty to carrying a concealed weapon and was sentenced to 12 days in jail with credit for six days served and $258 in fines and costs. The incident occurred last year in Niles.

GRAD

Continued from page A2

partners on advertisements and email campaigns while still managing and maintaining the organization's corporate social media accounts. My new role also comes with fun perks like working closely with other departments to create campaigns, testimonials, videos and more to increase brand awareness."

In August she marked five years with Arbor Financial Credit Union, which has 12 locations across southwest Michigan, including Three Rivers, Lawrence, Paw Paw, Kalamazoo, Portage and Otsego.

Flowers had lived in Portage, but was in the process of buying her first home with her husband, Ian, and moving to Kalamazoo.

"We will be moving to the beautiful Milwood neighborhood," she said.

They married in August 2023. "It was an amazing night filled with so many wonderful memories." She met her husband through an Arbor co-worker.

"I worked with her for a brief stint," Flowers said. "She dates his brother and, at the time, thought we would be a great match. Turns out, she's Cupid in the flesh!"

'I love trying new Kalamazoo restaurants'

For fun, she still plays tennis.

"I played in high school and never want to lose that skill," Flowers said. "I also love running, trying new restaurants in the ever-growing Kalamazoo area, exploring our great state and spending time with my family and friends."

She knows the current McKenzie Residence Hall Manager Kyra DeLoach, who is also from Sturgis. Both worked in SMC's marketing office.

"I found myself working in marketing when I began looking at on-campus employment opportunities," Flowers said. "In my search, I had reached out to my residence hall manager for insight. He proceeded to share with me that marketing may be hiring and recommended I reach out. From there, it was history. I was introduced to Whitney (Lents) and Michelle (Orlaske), who were amazing leaders and taught me so much in that short amount of time."

Professors made students feel valued

From her time at SMC, Flowers remembers "finding excellent friends and leaders. I also felt like opportunities were abundant, whether it be extra-curriculars, work opportunities or the education provided. I did not have a favorite professor, however, I valued them all. The professors on campus made students feel welcome and valued. I am spoiled enough to know that it is not a common occurrence for many young people experiencing college for the first time."

Her last time on campus was her final semester.

"I took in every moment!" Flowers said. "It was spring and campus started to come alive at that time! I hope that aspect is still the same!"

Niles Daily Star
Sports

GOT RESULTS?
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BASKETBALL

Buchanan girls beat Dowagiac 55-41

By SCOTT HASSINGER
Leader Publications Contributor

DOWAGIAC — With a tough stretch of games approaching, Buchanan's girls basketball team came into their Jan. 10 Lakeland Conference game at Dowagiac looking to build some momentum.

Buchanan's size, experience and pressure helped the Lady Bucks roll to a 55-41 win over Dowagiac.

Three players scored in double figures for Buchanan, now 1-2 in the Lakeland and 5-4 overall. Dowagiac falls to 1-3 and 3-5 overall.

The Lady Bucks were led in scoring by senior forward Kate Ailes with 18 points, while 6-foot-2 senior Alyssa Carson finished with 13 and Justyce Cashier posted 10. Aspen Berry added eight points, Caitlyn Horvath five and Cam Carlson rounded out the the Lady Bucks' scoring with one point.

Buchanan finished the night shooting 22-of-50 from the floor (44 percent) while making 9-of-15 free-throw attempts (60 percent).

Dowagiac was paced in the scoring

See BEAT, Page B2

SCOTT HASSINGER | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Dowagiac junior forward Marlie Carpenter (14) puts up a shot under pressure by Buchanan's Akirrah Robinson (52) and Alyssa Carson (44).

BASKETBALL

MORE THAN A GAME

Edwardsburg, Niles hoops battle in Little Warrior Big Heart contests

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

EDWARDSBURG — The Edwardsburg and Niles girls and boys basketball teams played ball for a cause Friday, Jan. 10.

The Eddies hosted their Little Warrior Big Heart doubleheader, with the girls defeating Niles 64-40 before the boys dropped a 51-47 decision to the Vikings. The game was dedicated to Ashlyn Markel, the daughter of Edwardsburg High School Principal Ryan Markel, who is battling cancer. T-shirts were sold at the game with a portion of the proceeds going to Ashlyn for her care.

On the girls side, the Eddies jumped out to a 24-11 first quarter lead and led by as many as 30 points in the game. Shelby Laubach led the way with 21 points, five rebounds, and two steals and Maddie Pobuda had 18 points and four steals while Ella Zache totaled 11 points, five steals, and two assists. Kya Shier added 10 points, five rebounds, five steals, and three assists and Kourtney Zarycki had four points and six rebounds.

Ari Geritts led Niles with 13 points and Jessie Thornton and

See MORE, Page B3

JEFF DOUGLAS | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

BOWLING

Niles bowling teams compete at Bronson Invite

COMMUNITY REPORT

BRONSON — The Niles Varsity Bowling team traveled to Bronson for the Bronson Invite on Friday.

Eight teams competed in this clash, completing 12 baker games, with total pin fall cut being the top four teams. The Vikings shot 1926 in their 12 qualifying games. Niles made the bracket play cut sitting at third place, averaging 160. In the first bracket play round, Niles took on Coldwater in the first round and beat the Cardinals 2-0 in a race to two games, winning 196-165 and 210-122 to take first place. Coldwater

See COMPETE, Page B3

PHOTO COURTESY OF KRISTI WESTON

FOOTBALL

Notre Dame ready to face Ohio State for title

COMMUNITY REPORT

ATLANTA, Ga. — Two upset losses stood out among the rest in college football this season. Notre Dame suffered one of them. Ohio State the other.

In years past, those losses might have been enough to knock both teams out of the hunt for a national title. This year, with the debut of the 12-team playoff, those two teams will play for it.

The Buckeyes beat Texas 28-14 on Friday night to set up a Jan. 20 meeting against the Fighting Irish. Ohio State hasn't lost since it fell 13-10 to Michigan in November. Notre Dame hasn't lost since it fell 16-14 to Northern Illinois way back in September.

Ohio State is in search of its sixth AP national title, ninth overall, and its first since the College Football Playoff debuted in 2014 with a four-team playoff. Notre Dame is going for its 12th championship, but its first since 1988.

This Big Ten vs. independent matchup means this is the second straight year that the Southeastern Conference will be shut out of the final after winning the championship in six of the

See READY, Page B3

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Hanratty inducted into Hall of Fame

COMMUNITY REPORT

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Terry Hanratty (1966-68), who led the University of Notre Dame to the 1966 National Championship as the starting quarterback and was a Consensus All-American in 1968 has been named to the 2025 College Football Hall of Fame Class, as announced by the National Football Foundation on Wednesday, January 15, 2025.

The 2025 College Football Hall of Fame Class will be officially inducted during the 67th NFF Annual Awards Dinner in Las Vegas on December 9, 2025.

Hanratty becomes the 56th former Fighting Irish student-athlete or coach in the College Football Hall of Fame, which is by far the most for any college football program.

Hanratty threw for over 1,200 yards in each of his three seasons as Notre Dame's starting quarterback and upon his graduation in 1969 held the program record for completions (304), passing yards (4,152) and passing touchdowns (27). He also rushed for 586 yards and 16 touchdowns. He finished in the top-10 of Heisman Trophy voting in all three seasons as Notre Dame's signal caller – 1966 (sixth), 1967 (ninth) and 1968 (third).

Some of Hanratty's notable performances at Notre Dame included –

• 16 for 24 passing for 304 yards and three touchdowns in his first career start against No. 7 Purdue in 1966.

• 11 of 17 passing for 129 yards and a rushing touchdown at No. 10 Oklahoma in 1966.

• 15 of 20 passing for 208 yards and two touchdowns, 46 yards rushing and one touchdown versus California in 1967.

• 18 for 27 passing for 202 yards and two touchdowns against No. 5 Oklahoma in 1968.

A Butler, Pennsylvania, native, a town located just north of Pittsburgh, Hanratty was drafted by the Steelers in the second round of the 1969 NFL Draft. He played seven seasons with his hometown team, helping the Steelers win the 1974 and 1975 Super Bowls. He also played one season in Tampa Bay in 1976 and finished with 2,510 passing yards and 24 touchdown passes during his NFL career. Hanratty's son, Conor, was an offensive lineman for Notre Dame from 2012-14.

SMC basketball teams fall to Marian Ancilla

COMMUNITY REPORT

PLYMOUTH, Ind. — SMC men and women's basketball teams lost contests to the Marian Ancilla Chargers Saturday, Jan. 11.

The women's team played a tight game in their conference opener at Marian Ancilla, but lost a close one in the fourth quarter, 67-65. The Roadrunners led by one point after the first quarter and at halftime, and by two after Q3, but were outscored in the fourth by four for the final margin.

SMC was led by freshman Rayvan Rush with 23 points, freshman Shiyah Forte added 16 and sophomore Amara Palmer put in 12. The Roadrunners shot 72 percent from the free throw line but just 34 percent overall from the field, turning the ball over 21 times.

Conference play continues at Kellogg Community College on Wednesday, January 15.

The men's team was without sophomore center Aries Hull, who was sidelined with an illness on Saturday, and lost their conference road opener to the Marian Ancilla Chargers, 65-49. The Roadrunners trailed by four at the half.

SMC was led by freshman Davion Goins, who double-doubled with 15 points and 14 rebounds, freshman Anthony Brady added 11 off the bench and RJ Davis had 8, going 2 for 4 from deep. The Roadrunners shot 63 percent from the free throw line and just 29 percent overall from the field, turning the ball over 18 times.

Conference play continues at Kellogg Community College on Wednesday, January 15.

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Dowagiac boys beat New Buffalo 54-45 for first win of season

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — The Dowagiac boys basketball team tasted victory Tuesday night in front of its home crowd.

The Chieftains defeated New Buffalo 54-45 and snapped a 10-game losing streak to pick up their first win of the season. Dowagiac led 24-20 at halftime.

Leading the way for Dowagiac was Isaiah Fitchett with 17 points and Jamal Williams and Braylon Wade scored 11 points apiece. Lucas Forker 16 led New Buffalo with 16 points.

Dowagiac (1-10,0-4) faces Benton Harbor at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 23 on the road.

DOWAGIAC 54, NEW BUFFALO 45

At Dowagiac

NEW BUFFALO (45): Nick Haskins 1, J. Shaw 6, S. Tripp 4, M'nason Smothers 9, Trevor James 9, Lucas Forker 16. 15 10-22 45.

DOWAGIAC (54): Jamal Williams 11, Lamone Moore Jr. 6, Braylon Wade 11, Devin Rock 3, Isaiah Fitchett 17, Chase Frazier 4, Riley McCaffrey 2. Totals 17 16-24 54.

New Buffalo 10 20 35 45

Dowagiac 16 24 37 54

3-point baskets: New Buffalo 5 (James 3, Tripp 1, Shaw 1), Dowagiac 4 (Fitchett 3, Williams 1). Total fouls (fouled out): New Buffalo 16 (Haskins), Dowagiac 19. Records: New Buffalo 8-4, Dowagiac 1-10.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TANYA HAGEN

BEAT

Continued from page B1

department by Niyah Moss with 10 points, while Olivia McIntosh and Marlie Carpenter finished with eight points each.

The Lady Chieftains made 14-of-49 shots from the floor (29 percent) and 11-of-24 (46 percent) at the foul stripe.

The Lady Bucks outrebounded Dowagiac 27-20.

Ailes pulled down seven rebounds and Carson six for Buchanan. Dowagiac was led on the boards by Moss and Sabrina Shivers with five apiece.

Buchanan forced Dowagiac into 30 turnovers on the evening. The Lady Bucks committed 18.

"One thing we've really been working on in practice is pushing the ball in transition because we have a lot of good athletes on this team," said Buchanan's head coach Alex Austin. "We got some steals off our press and got some unselfish passes for several easy baskets. That's what we want to see and we are starting to come together as a team. I think things really resonated after we lost to Edwardsburg a couple weeks ago. Tonight was a real physical game and I'm just so pleased with how we kept our composure when it got a little chippy at times."

Following next Thursday's contest at Benton Harbor, Buchanan will host St. Joseph Michigan Lutheran on Jan. 20 before going on the road to face Otsego on Jan. 22 and No. 1-ranked Niles Brandywine on Jan. 24.

"We need to continue to build the positivity and confidence to win some basketball games," Austin added.

Buchanan scored the first two baskets of the game before Dowagiac stormed back with a three pointer by Olivia McIntosh and a Carpenter free throw to knot the game up at 6-6.

The Lady Bucks, however, scored eight of the next 10 points to take a 14-8 advantage and led 15-9 after the first quarter.

Shivers got a steal that led to a three pointer by Evie Lock as Dowagiac pulled within five, 19-14, early in the second quarter. Cashier scored half of her points during the period to help Buchanan build a double-digit (32-22) halftime lead.

Dowagiac didn't do itself any favors as the Lady Chieftains committed five turnovers in its first six possessions in the third quarter. The Lady Bucks outscored its hosts 11-5 during that stretch while building its advantage to 43-27 entering the fourth quarter.

The closest Dowagiac would get in the final period was 13 points, 43-30, on Moss' basket down low.

Dowagiac first-year head coach Craig Schau said his young ballclub still struggles in the turnover department while getting used to new things he has implemented.

"We didn't help ourselves tonight with all the turnovers we had. We have to work on eliminating our mistakes. I thought we did a nice job though of breaking the press. Our kids were in the spots they were supposed to be in. We are a very young basketball team," Schau said.

Brenna Mott is the lone senior on Dowagiac's roster. There are four juniors, three sophomores and three freshmen on the team as well.

"We have contributors throughout our lineup. Most of these girls are used to playing a lot of zone defense and we are getting them used to more man-to-man. Marlie is huge contributor for us down low. We've struggled the past couple games with our shooting especially on the outside," Schau said.

DAILY DATA

FRIDAY, JAN. 10

BOYS BASKETBALL
NILES 51, EDWARDSBURG 47
At Edwardsburg
NILES (51): Quinton King Jr. 4, Brayden Favors 28, Andre Wells 6, Derek Hill Jr. 8, Donovyn Williams 5, Ceon Kirtdoll 0. Totals 18 12-21 51.
EDWARDSBURG (47): Joe Shivley 6, Brody Schimpa 16, Conor Solarek 6, Blaise Crist 7, Ayden Billingsly 2, Reed Gates 4, Matt Anders 6. Totals 19 6-7 47.
Niles 8 28 35 51
Edwardsburg 16 25 40 47
3-point baskets: Niles 3 (Hill Jr. 2, Favors 1), Edwardsburg 3 (Shivley 2, Schimpa 1). Total fouls (fouled out): Niles 13, Edwardsburg 24 (Schimpa). Records: Niles 6-4 (5-1 Wolverine Conference), Edwardsburg 7-2 (3-2 Wolverine Conference).
GIRLS BASKETBALL
BRANDYWINE 54, NEW BUFFALO 13
At New Buffalo
BRANDYWINE (54): Adeline Gill 8, Karleigh Byrd 5, Adelyn Drotoz 9, Ireland Prenkert 0, Mackenna Price 6, Lily Gill 4, Lexi Troup 3, Paige Krisler 12, Miley Young 5, Niyah Mason 0, Brook Brumitt 2. Totals 22 1-2 54.
NEW BUFFALO (13): Emma Seifert 0, Loney Strother 0, Addyson Lynch 0, Allyson Cardenas 0, Brianna Taylor 2, Peyton Swaim 11. Totals 5 0-4 13.
Brandywine 19 43 49 54
New Buffalo 2 2 5 13
3-point baskets: Brandywine 9 (Krisler 4, Drotoz 3, Byrd 1, Troup 1), New Buffalo 3 (Swaim 3). Total fouls: Brandywine 9, New Buffalo 5. Records: Brandywine 9-0, New Buffalo 3-5
BUCHANAN 55, DOWAGIAC 41
At Dowagiac
BUCHANAN (55): Caitlyn Horvath 5, Aspen Berry 8, Justyne Cashier 10, Katie Ailes 18, Cam Carlson 1, Alyssas Carson 13, Akirrah Robinson 0. Totals 22 9-15 55.
DOWAGIAC (41): Claire Hess 0, Shamyra Clark 3, Marlie Carpenter 8, Zabrina Shivers 3, Niya Moss 10, Evie Lock 3, Olivia McIntosh 8, Ava Nate 2, Sa'mela Bonds 4. Totals 14 11-24 41.
Buchanan 15 32 43 55
Dowagiac 9 22 27 41
3-point baskets: Buchanan 2 (Carson 1, Horvath 1), Dowagiac 2 (McIntosh 1, Lock 1). Total fouls: Buchanan 22 (Robinson), Dowagiac 12. Records: Buchanan 5-4 (1-2 Lakeland Conference), Dowagiac 3-5 (1-3 Lakeland Conference).
EDWARDSBURG 64, NILES 40
At Edwardsburg
NILES (40): Jessie Thornton 9, Maddie Zache 4, Kayla Kiggins 9, Mia Holmes 5, Ari Gerrits 13. Totals 15 6-10 40.
EDWARDSBURG (64): Shelby Laubach 21, Ella Zache 11, Maddie Pobuda 18, Kortney Zarycki 4, Kya Shier 10. Totals 26 5-6 64.
Niles 11 18 25 40
Edwardsburg 24 41 59 64
3-point baskets: Niles 4 (Thornton 1, Zache 1, Kiggins 1, Holmes 1), Edwardsburg 7 (Pobuda 4, Laubach 2, Zache 1). Total fouls: Niles 7, Edwardsburg 13. Records: Niles 2-6 (0-5 Wolverine Conference), Edwardsburg 7-2 (4-1 Wolverine Conference).

MONDAY, JAN. 13

BOYS BASKETBALL
BRANDYWINE 62, RIVER VALLEY 36
At Niles
RIVER VALLEY (36): Adam Slavens 4, Lorenzo Nava 6, Landon Rogers 2, Sean Driscoll 11, Cooper Lynch 13. Totals 15 6-9 36.
BRANDYWINE (62): Nylen Goins 26, Elijhia Burt 6, Will Hubbard 17, Ryder Richard 6, Emerson Gogley 3, Jordan Hester 2, Tyler Schoff 2. Totals 26 9-16 62.
River Valley 6 11 17 36
Brandywine 15 26 49 62
3-point baskets: River Valley 0, Brandywine 1 (Gogley 1). Total fouls: River Valley 12, Brandywine 10. Records: River Valley 5-4, Brandywine 6-4
GIRLS BASKETBALL
BRIDGMAN 53, DOWAGIAC 25
At Bridgman
DOWAGIAC (25): Claire Hess 2, Shamyra Clark 1, Marlie Carpenter 6, Brenna Mott 3, Niya Moss 2, Evie Lock 8, Olivia McIntosh 3. Totals 9 3-7 25.
BRIDGMAN (53): Emily Howell 2, Melanie Warren 2, Tatyanna Hill 16, Emma Mangold 2, Kate Starbuck 4, Lanie McGrory 27. Totals 19 10-21 53.
Dowagiac 4 12 16 25
Bridgman 12 24 40 53
3-point baskets: Dowagiac 4 (Lock 2, McIntosh 1, Mott 1), Bridgman 5 (McGrory 5). Total fouls: Dowagiac 16, Bridgman 11. Records: Dowagiac 3-6, Bridgman 5-2

TUESDAY, JAN. 14

GIRLS BASKETBALL
BRANDYWINE 69, BRONSON 37
At Niles
BRONSON (37): Jaiden Hayes 5, Ava Hathaway 16, Lydia Wells 3, Itzel Albarran 2, Ashlynn Harris 0, Aubree Calloway 11. Totals 12 7-15 37.
BRANDYWINE (69): Adeline Gill 16, Karleigh Byrd 8, Adelyn Drotoz 3, Ireland Prenkert 2, Mackenna Price 8, Lily Gill 7, Lexi Troup 3, Paige Krisler 6, Miley Young 12, Niyah Mason 2, Brook Brumitt 2. Totals 29 3-5 69.
Bronson 9 16 26 37
Brandywine 16 36 51 69
3-point baskets: Bronson 6 (Hathaway 3, Hayes 1, Wells 1, Calloway 1), Brandywine 8 (Price 2, Krisler 2, Byrd 1, Drotoz 1, L. Gill 1, Troup 1). Total fouls: Bronson 13, Brandywine 13. Records: Bronson 5-2, Brandywine 10-0
BOYS BASKETBALL
DOWAGIAC 54, NEW BUFFALO 45
At Dowagiac
NEW BUFFALO (45): Nick Haskins 1, J. Shaw 6, S. Tripp 4, M'nason Smothers 9, Trevor James 9, Lucas Forker 16. 15 10-22 45.
DOWAGIAC (54): Jamal Williams 11, Lamone Moore Jr. 6, Braylon Wade 11, Devin Rock 3, Isaiah Fitchett 17, Chase Frazier 4, Riley McCaffrey 2. Totals 17 16-24 54.
New Buffalo 10 20 35 45
Dowagiac 16 24 37 54
3-point baskets: New Buffalo 5 (James 3, Tripp 1, Shaw 1), Dowagiac 4 (Fitchett 3, Williams 1). Total fouls (fouled out): New Buffalo 16 (Haskins), Dowagiac 19. Records: New Buffalo 8-4.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 15

BOYS BASKETBALL
VICKSBURG 51, NILES 48
At Vicksburg
NILES (48): Quinton King Jr. 1, Brayden Favors 15, Andre Wells 17, Derek Hill Jr. 5, Donovyn Williams 10. Totals 20 5-8 48.
VICKSBURG (51): Graham Kubiak 10, Mitchell Beyer 14, Gage Schiedel 3, Austin Androsky 4, Jordan Diekman 4, Anthony Marchese 14, Braylen Vallier 2. Totals 21 6-6 51.
Niles 13 19 37 48
Vicksburg 3 21 38 51
3-point baskets: Niles 3 (Favors 1, Wells 1, Hill Jr. 1), Vicksburg 3 (Kubiak 2, Beyer 1). Total fouls: Niles 13, Vicksburg 15. Records: Niles 6-5 (5-2 Wolverine Conference), Vicksburg 4-8 (3-4 Wolverine Conference).
PAW PAW 57, EDWARDSBURG 52
At Paw Paw
EDWARDSBURG (52): Joe Shively 2, Brody Schimpa 26, Conor Solarek 18, Blaise Crist 2, Michael Wright 0, Matt Anders 4. Totals 23 1-2 52.
PAW PAW (57): Elias Sonnenberg 2, Truman Brennan 17, Ryan Holmes 2, Barron Marinich 6, Kaelien Tate 16, Caden Bowen 10, Ayden Roth 4. Totals 23 11-21 57.
Edwardsburg 11 29 38 52
Paw Paw 14 23 39 57
3-point baskets: Edwardsburg 5 (Schimpa 3, Solarek 2), Paw Paw 0. Total fouls: Edwardsburg 16, Paw Paw 13. Records: Edwardsburg 7-3 (3-3 Wolverine Conference), Paw Paw 9-1 (6-1 Wolverine Conference).
GIRLS BASKETBALL
EDWARDSBURG 58, PAW PAW 49
At Edwardsburg
PAW PAW (49): Grace Mitchell 15, Zoey Bridges 2, Stella Shaefer 4, A.J. Rickli 14, Kailey Nichols 6, Mecenzie Allen 8. Totals 18 5-11 49.
EDWARDSBURG (58): Shelby Laubach 5, Ella Zache 6, Maddie Pobuda 27, Kourtney Zarycki 7, Mya Eberlein 11, Kya Shier 2. Totals 22 5-14 58.
Paw Paw 11 29 37 49
Edwardsburg 19 30 41 58
3-point baskets: Paw Paw 8 (Mitchell 4, Nichols 2, Schaefer 1, Rickli 1), Edwardsburg 9 (Pobuda 6, Zache 2, Laubach 1). Total fouls (fouled out): Paw Paw 15 (Shaefer), Edwardsburg 14. Records: Paw Paw 7-2 (4-2 Wolverine Conference), Edwardsburg 8-2 (5-1 Wolverine Conference).
VICKSBURG 65, NILES 21
At Vicksburg
NILES (21): Jessie Thornton 6, Tanaya Brown 2, Maddie Zache 2, Gianna Ball 3, Jaliyah Woods 3, Kayla Kiggins 0, Mia Holmes 5, Ari Gerrits 0. Totals 7 4-6 21.
VICKSBURG (65): Scarfett Hosmer 10, Kendra Cooley 14, Emily Zemitans 12, Ella Mann 6, Makayla Allen 11, Hannah DeVries 12. Totals 29 6-11 65.
Niles 7 14 16 23
Vicksburg 26 41 59 65
3-point baskets: Niles 3 (Woods 1, Ball 1, Holmes 1), Vicksburg 1 (Allen 1). Total fouls: Niles 11, Vicksburg 5. Records: Niles 2-7 (0-6 Wolverine Conference), Vicksburg 9-0 (6-0 Wolverine Conference).

JEFF DOUGLAS | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

The Edwardsburg boys and girls basketball teams and the Niles boys basketball team pose with Ashlyn Markel (center) and her family prior to the tipoff of the boys game at Edwardsburg High School.

MORE

Continued from page B1

Kayla Kiggins each had nine. Edwardsburg (7-2,4-1) has won six straight games as it prepares to host Paw Paw at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday. Niles (2-6,0-5) hosts Vicksburg at 7:15 p.m. Tuesday.

On the boys side, the Vikings outscored the Eddies 20-9 in the second quarter to take a 28-25 lead into halftime. Edwardsburg responded with a 15-7 edge in the third to go up 40-35 entering the fourth before the Vikings surged with a 16-7 run to close out the game.

Niles' Brayden Favors led all scorers with 28 points and Derek Hill Jr. added eight points. Brody Schimpa led Edwardsburg with 16 points and Blaise Crist added seven.

Niles' win over Edwardsburg snapped the Eddies' five-game winning streak. The Vikings(6-4, 5-1) face Vicksburg at 7:15 p.m. Tuesday on the road and Edwardsburg (7-2,3-2) will travel to face Paw Paw at 7:15 p.m. Tuesday.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KRISTI WESTON

COMPETE

Continued from page B1

finished third place beating host Bronson in the third place game.

On the other side of the bracket, Portage Central and Bronson faced off, going into a roll with Portage Central coming out on top. The Vikings and Mustangs moved on to the championship match with the Vikings taking the first game 169-123. The second match came down to the 10th frame with a lay ball thrown by Junior Aidan Kidwell for the Vikings coming out on top 155-154. The Vikings move on to face Vicksburg next Wednesday at home.

Niles Viking Varsity girls also made match play out of six teams finishing and medaled in fourth place.

READY

Continued from page B1

previous eight years.

It felt right that the nation's best defense turned an opponent's first-and-goal from its 1 into a touchdown of its own. That's how Ohio State wrapped up its win Friday night — a fitting exclamation point for a team that leads the country in both yards and points allowed.

Notre Dame is good on 'D,' too. The Fighting Irish allow the ninth-fewest yards and also rank third in turnover differential even after losing that battle in the win over Penn State.

Leonard has been figuring out ways to win in the playoffs using his arms and legs, but other than a fourth-quarter flurry against a big, fast Penn State defense, the fighting Irish offense has plodded through the quarters and semifinals.

The losses this season helped set the tone for both teams as they embarked on the sort of comeback that might not have been possible in years past.

"The time you're tested the most is when you're at your lowest point," said Notre Dame coach Marcus Freeman, who will become the first Black coach to capture the national title with a win. "We lose to Northern Illinois and you've got a decision: 'Do I want to be selfless? Or am I going to put individual glory ahead of myself?'"

Ohio State coach Ryan Day said the Michigan game is "what life's all about."

"You have to go through adversity along the way, and how you handle adversity is how you define life, and these guys are going through life lessons right now," Day said.

Tickets on sale for Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber Business Recognition Breakfast

COMMUNITY REPORT

ST. JOSEPH — The Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber has announced the keynote speaker for its annual Business Recognition Breakfast Awards Ceremony annual Annual Meeting, presented by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Corewell Health, and Honor Credit Union on Friday, February 21st.

Returning to keynote the breakfast is leadership speaker, Wall Street Journal bestselling author and creator of the renowned TEDTalk "Everyday Leadership – The Lollipop Moment", Drew Dudley.

In addition to Dudley's keynote, attendees will hear a full Chamber update and the presentation of the 2025 Business Recognition Awards, which will be determined via live voting by attendees during the first half of the event.

"We are thrilled to welcome Drew Dudley back to Southwest Michigan for our 2025 Business Recognition Breakfast. His ability to inspire and challenge the way we think about leadership has left a lasting impact on our business community. This year's keynote, filled with practical wisdom and actionable insights, promises to empower attendees to tackle real-life challenges with confidence and clarity," says Arthur Havlicek, President & CEO of the Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber. "At the Chamber, we remain committed to fostering leadership and celebrating the incredible contributions of our local businesses, and this event is the perfect way to kick off another year of impact and collaboration."

Dudley is no stranger to Southwest Michigan having presented in October of 2023 on 'Cultures of Leadership' where he captivated everyone in attendance, and succeeded in changing the way the majority viewed their personal leadership style. During the 2024 Breakfast, Dudley engaged over 600 attendees by shifting his presentation to 'The Leadership Test' consisting of six (6) questions designed to drive engagement and empower employees to be more productive and impactful in all areas of their lives.

For 2025, Dudley's keynote called "Edge of the Bed Advice": Leadership Wisdom for Real Life, will focus on the key questions of, "What are the best insights you can share with me? What do I need to know? What wisdom has most contributed to your success and happiness?"

That is the "Edge of the Bed" Question, and for the last fifteen years Dudley has collected thousands of responses from leaders of all kinds: gold medalists to CEOs, custodians to Uber drivers, and toddlers to retirees. In this presentation Dudley will share the most insightful and practical of these insights, with an eye on providing proven strategies for overcoming the most common life and leadership challenges you face every day.

As the founder and chief catalyst of Day One Leadership, he has helped top organizations around the world increase their leadership capacity. With a mission to help people unlearn some dangerous lessons about leadership, his clients have included McDonald's, American Express, JP Morgan Chase, the United Way, and more than 100 colleges and universities.

Dudley adds, "There's an energy and vibrancy to the southwest Michigan business community that says a lot about the people who create that community. I'm excited to come back and share the best insights I've gathered from great minds around the world with the leaders committed to making Southwest Michigan a better place to live and work."

Tickets for the 2025 Business Recognition Breakfast Annual Meeting & Awards Ceremony at the Lake Michigan College Mendel Center's Grand Upton Hall are now on-sale online at bit.ly/BRBAwards2025. Early Bird pricing of $60 each or $500 for a table of 10 runs through January 31st. After that regular pricing of $65 each or a table of 10 for $550 will run through February 9th.

AWARD CATEGORIES INCLUDE:

Business Focused:

- Best New Business
- Economic Impact Award
- Small Business of the Year Award
- Non-Profit Excellence Award

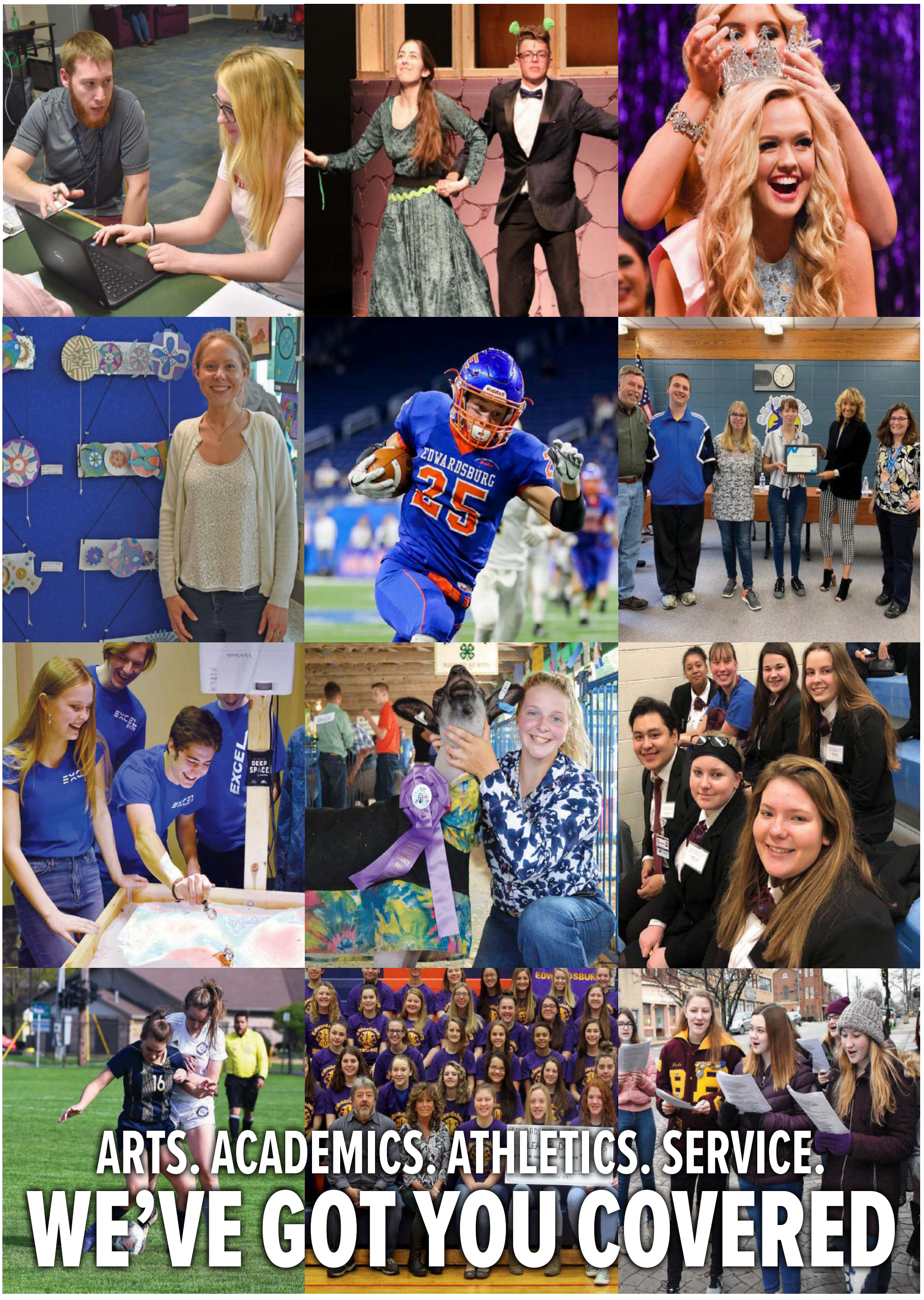
Community Focused:

- Community Placemaking - New for 2025

Individual Focused:

- Rising Star Award
- The Pat Moody Award

Award nominees will be announced January 24th. In keeping with tradition, the Chamber will also recognize one of their Ambassadors as their 2024 Ambassador of the Year.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Miscellaneous For Sale

For sale, a refurbished mid-2019 Apple Macbook Pro with .4 GHz Intel Core i5 (13.3 inch, 8GB RAM, 256GB SSD) Space Gray (Renewed)
Brand Apple
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CPU Model Core i5
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Asking $500. It is still in the box.

Also for sale, a RIF6 adjustable height standing desk converter — 32-inch wide laptop riser or dual monitor workstation. Easily sit or stand with gas spring lift. Still in the box. Asking $75. Will sell in combo with the computer or separately.

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University of Notre Dame du Lac in Notre Dame, Indiana, duLac@nd.edu

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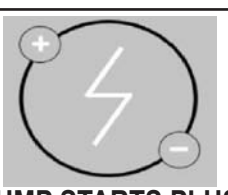

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Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

Auctioning off a few abandoned cars on Thursday, January 23rd, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. at RB Towing 68686 M 62, Edwardsburg, MI 49112

Niles Daily Star:
Jan. 18, 2024
ABANDONED VEHICLES

PUBLIC NOTICE

BID NOTICE

SEEKING MBE/WBE SUB-CONTRACTORS R. Yoder Construction, Inc., an EEO Employer is seeking qualified MBE/WBE Subcontractors for the following project. City of Niles – 2024 CAPITAL FUNDING PROJECT, Niles, MI Bid Date: 1/31/2025 - Time: 3:00PM. Sub-Contractor bids must reach our office no later than 1/30/2025. Anyone interested in bidding on this project should call: 574-773-3502 or email: estimating@ryoderconstruction.com for plans and specifications.

Niles Daily Star:
Jan. 18 and 25, 2025
BID

PUBLIC NOTICE

The January 9, 2025, Bertrand Charter Township Board Regular Meeting draft minutes have been posted at the Bertrand Charter Township Hall, 3835 Buffalo Road, Buchanan, MI 49107 and on the township website (bertrandtwpmi.gov). Polly White, Clerk Bertrand Charter Township

Niles Daily Star:
Jan. 18 2025
MINUTES

Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

AUCTION
Niles Storage, 2457 Yankee St. Niles, MI. 49120 January 25, 2025 @ 4:00 pm Owner's lien - overdue rents

Unit # 89 Chris Ingle Tools, Game tables, Misc items
Unit #29 Dale Clifton
Fishing equip, household items, Tools

Niles Daily Star:
Jan. 11 and 18, 2025
STORAGE AUCTION

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Economy Storage, 2206 Yankee Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction Saturday January 25, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

Unit#	Name
3	Carla Burrell
10	Charmin Kelly
12	Michael Purdy
32	Eric Johnson
67	Jerom Jankowiak
85	Sheldon Walden
91	Austin Richey
99	Jimmie Tayler
113	Tanner Sinclair
114	Tellie Doan
115	Nate Bedford
116	Melissa Kaeding
125/179	Steve Kelley
127/633	Chris Norris
145/467/468	Michael Merritt
164	Brady Hattenback
166	Crystal Tripp
177	Larry Wegrecki
191	Alan Smith
217	James Russell
258	Briana Coon
261	Amanda Sharmer
269	Kacey Gagley
273	Tony Pompey
278	Chelsie Carlyle
284	Kathleen Peterson
324	Stephanie Smith
342	Terrence Moss
346	DaMonica Williams
356	Chase Molica
375	Jenna Shirrell
379	Bobbie Helms
389	Parnell Jenkins
392	Asia Shinall
399	Les Hart
412	Tyler Ballard
427/428	McCade Reese
442	Dawn Hojara
451	Jean Fitch
452	Tyler Mahar
459	Jethrow Kyles
486	Leigh Anne Norris
538	Joe Rose
541	Nicole Hurt
545	Candy Whitmire
557	Michelle Richter
605	Michael Lewark
608	Robert Conner
628/499	Altavious Stone
638	Britney Stanczyk
661/665	Rodney Prescott
673	Michael Nikodem II
677/567	Julie Potate

Niles U-Stor-It, 1314 E. Main Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction Saturday January 25, 2025 at 10:30 a.m.

5	Paul Welling
13	Michael Purdy
47	Pamela Whitaker
49	Miranda Wendzel
57	Nathan Haynes

J & J Storage, 2220 S. 13th Street and 2627 S. 11th Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction Saturday January 25, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.

170A	Melisa Visel
194A	Wayne Sullivan II
312A/313A	Gregory Martin
121	George Warr
125	Kristina Hemminger
136 (Harrison)	Jennifer White
149	William Root
206	Larry Morbach
227	Jennifer Nichols
238/466	James Diss
250 Vissik	Robert Clayton/Jessica
259	William Pritchard
263	Tamara Holmes
282/294	Joseph Barnes
292 Crafts	The Woodshed
301	Rebecca Nichols
345	Carol Morrow
355	Carson Bowlin
359	Christina Bright
373 Outlaw	Rhonda Sue
377	Christy Stevens
420	Michelle Boyce
426	James Schilling Jr.
509	Samantha Curtis

Niles Daily Star:
Jan. 18, 2025
STORAGE AUCTION

Modineer Company LLC

Assistant Business Unit Leader

Perform the manufacturing process engineering research, design, development, and day-to-day activities of metal component manufacturing processes and systems, and directly supervise 12 employees.

Bachelor Degree in Mechanical Engineering or Industrial Engineering is required (Foreign educational equivalent is acceptable). Also required is 18 months of employment experience as an Associate Mechanical Engineer, Industrial Engineer, or Quality Engineer. Education or experience (which may have been gained concurrently) must include demonstrated ability in utilizing the following computer design software and programs: AutoCAD; SolidWorks; and PTC Creo.
This position requires limited domestic travel throughout the U.S.

Place of employment is at Modineer Company LLC, 2102 S. 11 th St., Niles, MI 49120. Please send resume to: Modineer Company LLC, Attn: Sabrina Pesce – HR Mgr., 2102 S. 11 th St., Niles, MI 49120.

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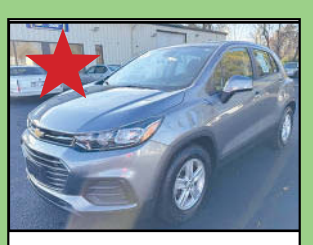

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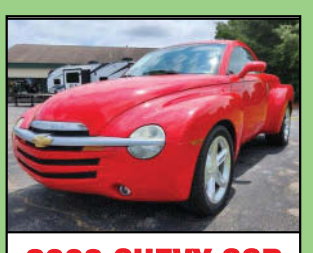

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